

# “*The Story of Sindh*”

R. D CHOKSEY - K . S SASTRY

( An Economic Survey )

1843 - 1933

Reproduced By:

Sani H. Panhwar

# **The Story of Sindh**

*( An Economic Survey )*

**1843 - 1933**

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**TO**

**FATIMA**

**in**

**Grateful Acknowledgement**

**For**

**all you have done for me**

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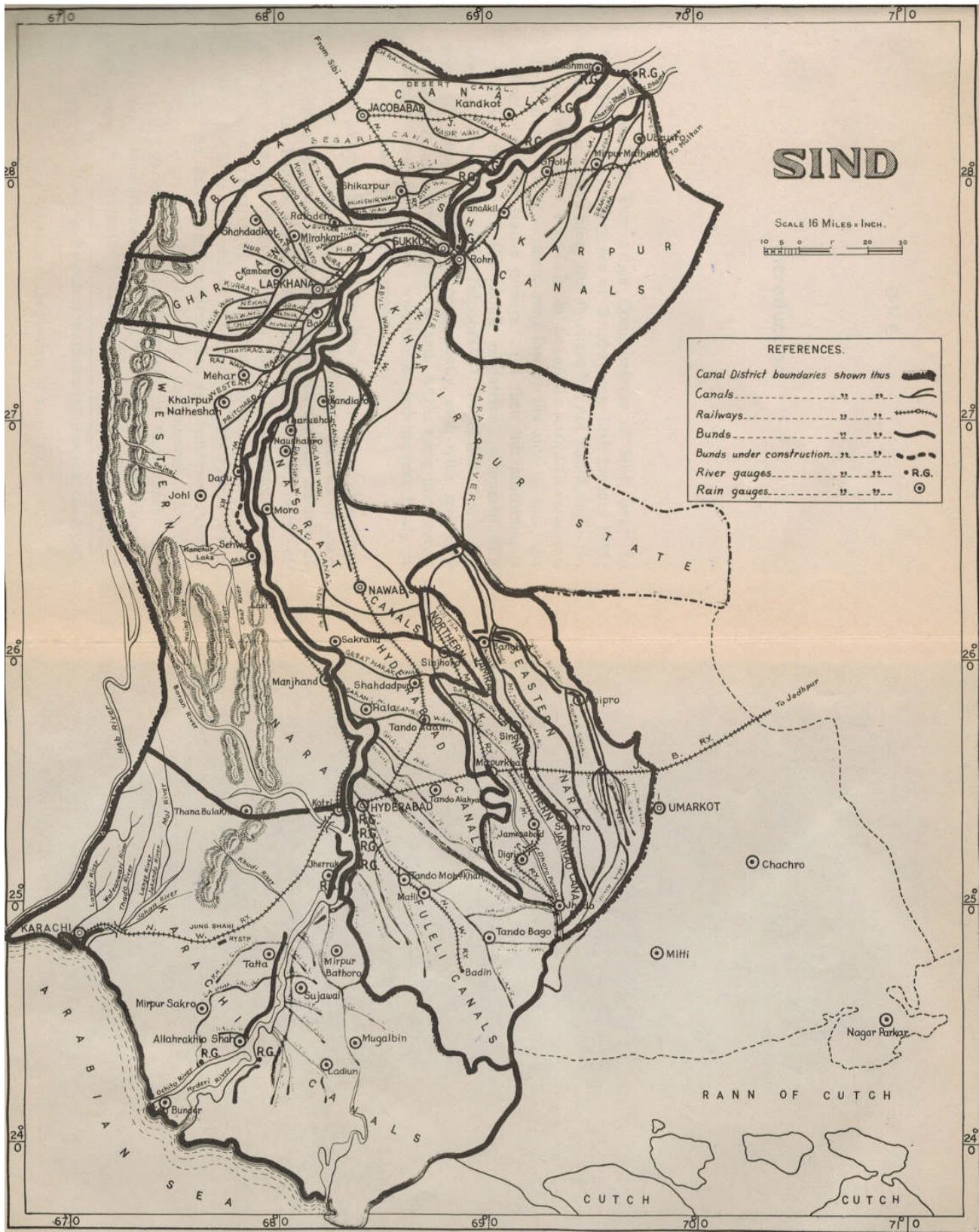
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## EDITOR'S PREFACE

The aim of the present work is to give the reader an account of the economic conditions prevailing in Sindh, from the time of the British conquest in 1843 to 1933 when Sindh was separated from the Bombay Presidency. The late Dr. R. D. Choksey, a reputed research scholar with not less than sixteen standard works to his credit, felt that no justice had been done to the study of the economic history of India. He held that the task was too stupendous to be undertaken and completed by a single individual. He also felt that the best approach to the study of this neglected branch of history would be a regional one.

In pursuance of this view he had undertaken a region-wise research study, of the economic history of the former Bombay Presidency. Before his premature death in 1976, he completed and published the economic histories of Bombay Deccan (1818-1939), Bombay Karnatak (1818-1939), Bombay Konkan (1818-1939) and Bombay Gujarat (1800-1939). The last part of the series was the economic history of Sindh which he could not publish during his life time although he had completed the preparation of the manuscript. A good deal of editing was required before it could be made ready for publishing. As a former colleague of Dr. R. D. Choksey in the Department of, History at the Nowrosjee Wadia College, Pune, where he was Principal, I was well acquainted with this work in all its stages. Therefore I undertook to edit the work.

The province of Sindh was unique in that, it alone among all the provinces of British India had not been under Hindu rule since A. D. 712. For the next 1,130 years it had been ruled by Muslim sovereigns. After its annexation by the British, Sindh was first governed as a separate province for a short while. Then it was united with the Bombay Presidency, firstly because it was a deficit province and secondly because of administrative convenience. That it was a deficit province should be clearly borne in mind while making a study of the economic history of the region and it was in this respect that it differed from the other regions of the Bombay Presidency.

The work of the Editor was primarily concerned with preparing a copy for print from the manuscript in order to lend greater authenticity to the statements the Author has made I have supplied them with figures taken from various Official Reports. I considered that it was in the fitness of, things to take the general narration of the story from 1933 where Dr. R. D. Choksey had left it to 1947 when the fortunes of the province came to be linked with the fortunes of the newly created state of Pakistan. An exhaustive bibliography is provided and the index

is prepared on the pattern adopted by the Author in his earlier works. If I have failed to rise to the standards of late Dr. R. D. Choksey, the faults are mine.

By the middle of the 19th century, the people of Sindh, long accustomed to a monotonous medieval life, were suddenly confronted by a new political and economic life ushered in by the British connection. *The Story of Sindh* is the story of the awakenings of its people due to this contact. The mode and pace of this transition, the stresses and strains which the transition brought in its train is authentically dealt with in this work. The period covered is from the conquest of Sindh by Sir Charles Napier in 1843 to the Separation of Sindh from Bombay in 1933 which was immediately followed by the introduction of Provincial Autonomy. Every major aspect of the subject is adequately covered-geography, land, the people, irrigation, labour, agriculture, commerce, industry, transport, finance, banking and above all the development of the Port of Karachi.

Since the Author is no more, the Editor would like to take liberty of mentioning the Author's approach to the study of the subject. His approach to the study as presented here varies from his earlier works on the economic histories of Bombay Deccan and Bombay Karnatak (1818-1868). The Author had confessed that he was grateful to Prof Andrus *Burmese Economic Life* which furnished him with a new approach and new model for the writing of an economic history. The plan of that work had appealed to the Author and *The Story of Sindh* is a readable account of a similar nature. What the *Sunday Statesman* (Calcutta) wrote in review of the Author's earlier work in this series: *Economic Life in Bombay Deccan*, is true of this volume as well: It is a model for writing an economic history of India.

The Author was aware that his work had its limitations and the major limitation was due to the paucity of required material for building up his account. Yet no effort was spared by him to avail himself of all material likely to throw, sufficient light on all the main trends of economic development throughout the ninety years of British rule in Sindh.

*The Story of Sindh* is the outcome of a patient study and a thorough analysis of the original material available in such places as the offices of The Director of Land Records, the Revenue Authorities, The Director of the Local Authorities and the *Peshwa Daftar*. Besides, the secondary, authorities on the general matter of the subject under study have also been freely made use of. A list of the material consulted by the author, both published and unpublished, is provided in the Bibliography.

The publication of this work completes the author's series on the economic history of Western India during British rule. Had he but lived longer, the author



could have completed the last and the finishing part of the work with greater authority and greater competence which I cannot pretend to possess. To me, it is a labour of love which I have tried to discharge as best as I can.

The late Dr. R. D. Choksey was on the sick-bed for a long time and Miss Fatima who, though no relation of his, nursed him with affectionate care as only a daughter could. She had come from East Africa to pursue her studies at the N. Wadia College, Pune and Dr. Choksey was her local guardian. To her the book is dedicated as per the expressed wish of the Author.

5-10-1983,

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# ONE

## Introduction

Mr. H. B. E. Frere, then Commissioner of Sindh, wrote to Lord Elphinstone, Governor of Bombay, on 12th January 1855: *Since Nadir Shah's time, the Province has not had a single ten years of what could, even in India, be called a settled Government. The Kulloras would, as rulers, rank low by the side of the least civilized of modern Native powers. Yet their administration is now looked back to by the people as paternal compared with the clumsy barbarism of the Talpoors.*<sup>1</sup> From their first accession, six Talpur Mirs ruled concurrently, each with sovereign authority in their own share of the land. At the same time, several relations, great feudatories, and almost independent heads of tribes, exercised nearly equal powers.

The government of the Mirs was an unalloyed despotism supported by a feudal system very similar to that which once prevailed in Europe. Of the tribes that vied for the mastery of the land the Baluchi chiefs were most important. Most of the lands were held by them in *jagir* and as feudal chiefs fought for the Talpurs, each of whom was bound to furnish his quota of troops to the Mirs on occasions of necessity. This system was a check on the Baluchi independence for as Lieutenant Postais observed: *apart from their feudatories they possessed in reality no power whatsoever and were dependent on their concurrence ere they could not undertake any measures with which the other Governments would be dominated as those affecting the public well.*<sup>2</sup> The Mirs had no standing army beyond a body guard or household troops in constant attendance. With the force of their jagirdars they could at most muster 50,000 men and paid a wage of 2 annas a day to foot and double that to horse. Hence they were always in haste to disband no sooner the necessity was over.

As the reigning families multiplied, each successive generation added to the number of generally illiterate and with a few exceptions, ignorant and incompetent rulers. They disputed and sometimes fought and conquered from one another, they exchanged, they divided and sub-divided, they assigned, resumed and changed, the jagirs with which they paid for, every service, civil or military and each grant was, for the time, a recognised territorial division. If a district were peculiarly fertile, it became an object of strife and often of ultimate division. Add to this the necessary tendency to movement and fluctuation of the

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<sup>1</sup> Selections from the Records of Bombay Government., No. XVIII. 1855 p 4

<sup>2</sup> Aitken, E. A., Gazetteer of the Province of Sind 1907, p 134

population in any country where cultivation depends on canals and where the canals, if not carefully looked after, will flood a district in one year and leave it barren the next, and some idea may be formed of the kind of confusion which existed in all revenue and territorial divisions, at the downfall of the Talpurs.

In spite of their illiteracy and ignorance Dr J. Burnes, who had better means of knowing, than any other Englishman admired the Mirs for the primitive simplicity of their race and stated that their temperance in private life was really remarkable. They seldom or never ate opium or, smoked the hookah. With two exceptions they were of the *Shia* sect and unlike the Baluchis they were strict in the observance of religion. In their dress there was no gaudy, show but a most gratifying taste in dress and attention to cleanness. In their manners they were haughty and reserved, yet courteous, and in exercise of hospitality, extravagant. The splendour of their court amazed the British envoys. The only personal extravagance was the indulgence of their passionate love of jewellery and fine swords and daggers and other arms. They had agents in, Persia to seek these and secured many historic blades of fabulous value. They had also induced skilful gunsmiths and hired them to settle in Hyderabad. Every visitor to Sindh before its conquest noted their passionate, love of sports. Large tracts of fertile lands were kept as forests, *Shikargahs*, regardless of loss of revenue and hardship to the subjects similar love of hunting was found in Europe all throughout the Middle Ages.

The revenue was derived by the Mirs from lands, was included in jagirs and *inams*, custom duties, tolls and taxes on trade productions and natural advantages. The local revenue system was zamindari, land was let to a zamindar for a definite period usually a year, on an agreement specifying the share of the produce which the zamindar was to pay to the Government This was generally two-fifths on land near the river or naturally irrigated, one third or less on land watered by canals or wheels and one fifth on waste land requiring reclamation. These vague conditions left good deal to be decided on the spot, and the work of measurement and appraisalment gave employment to a very large number of Hindus, who thus rose to power and wealth such visits by land appraisers caused much misery than even the foray by the Baluchis. In case of crops, other than grains, revenue was recovered in cash, but rate varying according to the character of the land. There were a large number, of cesses, though simple in theory, were complicated in practice. In spite of these, the Government was considered mild and equitable than most absolute Governments. According to John Jacob the British rule increased rather than decreased the burden of the subject. The Mirs were known to sell their rights to collect the revenue to contractors for a fixed sum to save the trouble of collection. This practice was common throughout Western India even under the Marathas. To leave the cultivator to the mercy of the middleman was the bane of the agricultural system

all over this part of India. The ruler seldom if ever, came in contact with the ryot. Hence the contractor wrung the utmost from the cultivator who had no appeal. This picture reminds one of the similar conditions prevailing in all parts of the *Peshwa's* dominions, before the advent of the British.

The villages were nearly all of good size and possessed a *bazar*. The houses were of mud with flat roofs and those of the poorer classes are of tamarisk wood, covered with mats and boughs, or were procurable, grass. Many villages were composed almost entirely of dwellings of the latter description, little if any distinction, being observable between the shed of cattle and of their owners. In low lands the villages were raised, and sometimes had also, a ditch all round them, as a guard against inundation. Those which were the residence of chiefs, or large zamindars and Government officials, had mud forts, with a tower at each corner, and in almost all villages was to be seen the watch tower, which served as a place of defence for the inhabitants when suddenly attacked by predatory bands. Similar towers were also frequently met with the middle of the fields for the protection of the crops against the inroads of the mountain robbers. All the towns and villages were directly in the extreme and mostly void of all comfort. The mosque, the *bazar*, the headman's house or fort constituted the important landmarks of a village and around them were the homes of the villagers, usually in enclosure of thorns contained the dwelling and cattle sheds and a raised platform on poles, on which the people slept in summer. Adjoining these were the pens of sheep and goats, also enclosed by thorns. The villages were called after the headman whose tribe was only mentioned for the sake of brevity and also because it was unchangeable.

As in Hindu India the Muslim conquerors also recognised the institutes of 'Manu' where by land was declared to be the property of him who brought it under cultivation. But changes were affected by the rulers in Sindh in this equitable law as they were done in Mughal India by the successors of the great Akbar. It is impossible to go very far back into the past regarding anything connected with Sindh, whose records, scanty in themselves, have been still further diminished by the unrelenting hand of fanaticism. But we could still trace some faint resemblance in later times to the old village system, whose working is so praised - a system, to which Mahomedan conquerors of the country had found it to their interest to maintain, though not in its original purity.

This primitive order of things was, however, soon laid aside, when the retainers of the ruling power were, quartered upon the country, receiving land in lieu of cash wages the soil must then virtually change proprietors and the whole system was adapted to the immediate wants of the Government. As previously stated the lands were vested in the zamindars and their heirs in perpetuity. Besides the zamindars some men possessed a hereditary right to cultivate and their lands

could not be taken from them at will but they paid *lapa* or rent to zamindar, generally in kind. There was a fee leviable on the produce of the lands, called *Wagah Zamindari*, which was claimed by the headman. When a portion of the land was sold, the purchaser became entitled to the rent (*lapa*), but the *Wagah* was still given to the headman.

Here in Sindh, the village system reminds, to a certain extent, of the conditions prevailing in the Deccan. The *Kotwal* is like the village *Patail* whose duty was to point out the cultivation to the Government and to define boundaries and estates, as also to assist in all matters of revenue collection, for which they received a fee from that portion of the produce laid aside prior to the whole being divided between the Government and the cultivator. The Hindus, as previously mentioned, were the appraisers of revenue and the poorer classes, who held small patches of land in their own right, were principally indebted to the Hindus for means of cultivating them as elsewhere, the accounts of the ryots ran from season to season and care was taken to keep them involved, leaving them a bare subsistence till the next harvest. The story of poverty being the same every where, the zamindars and their vested interests all over the land were well protected, they could make their own terms with those to whom they rented their lands, usually receiving, besides fees, a portion of the produce and paid the Government demands themselves. In spite of a low land rent in cash it was advantageous only to the zamindars who continue to take the same share as before from his tenants. It was true that the zamindar advanced the seed, the bullocks and repaired the water course but in a bad season made his tenants pay the Government dues and return his advances.

The zamindar was looked upon in awe by the peasant, and his advice was acted on in all agriculture matters of the community. His laborers remained with him with their families as they were averse to change and only left because unbearable extortion. Like peasants all over the country they were satisfied with a bare substance and small advances of money. Where the wages were paid in kind the cultivators and laborers were necessarily poor.

With regard to lands in *jagir*, the grantee stood in the light of the Government and made his own remissions and received his dues from the zamindars, who continued in possession of all their rights. There was a strong band of union between all members of the community from the zamindar downwards. The village community, like that in the Deccan, was bound by ties of service rendered by them. The village carpenter, for instance received his fee for the annual repair of the Persian wheel and the potter for his supply of earthen vessels every villager was more or less dependent on the community, whose interest they found so, intimately connected with their own. The cementing factor was the zamindar.

The boundaries of the estates were not clearly defined which caused many feuds between, neighbouring villages. If a man wished to reclaim waste lands he applied to Government for a *pata* granting it to him in Zamindari, or otherwise according to circumstances, and fixing the rent at a very low rate for, the first few seasons but the Government appraisers, as we know, usually contrived to find some flaw in the document, or, some alleged agreement uncomplied with as a pretext for assessing the land at the full rate shortly after its clearance. This attitude caused much misery to the cultivators. For the granting of *patas* the land was divided into *Ahitah*, or clear of jungle *Nahwur*, or with slight jungle, and *jungle* or thick jungle, and the amount of remission estimated accordingly, but by no fixed rule. Sometimes a man, would incur great expense in digging a canal etc., but, a year afterwards he would find his labour unrewarded, some office *munshi* would pretend to discover that the land was probably *Nahwur*, and not thick jungle as specified in the *pata*. It was seldom that the Amirs themselves interfered in the collection of the revenue, or increase of cultivation.

The general mode of collecting revenue depended on the advantages a cultivator enjoyed. These have been already mentioned. We have also stated the proportion of share of, the output between the cultivator and the Government. It now remains to mention the modes of assessment that prevailed *viz.*, *buttaee*, *kasagee*, *cash rent*, and *eree rukub*:

The *buttaee*, or rent in kind, was a certain portion of the produce, varying from a quarter to half, but generally speaking, two fifths.

*Kaagee* was also a portion of the produce but estimated with reference to the extent of land cultivated. It was equal to about one-fourth.

The *cash-rent* varied according to the nature of the crop, from Rs 3 to Rs 5.

The *eree rukub* was commutation of *kasagee* into cash, by taking the average market price for six months of certain villages laid down.

We have already mentioned the part played by the appraisers and the measures and their influence on the ryots. We now look a little closely in their work of collecting the revenue. When the crops were fairly ripened those that were to pay *kasagee*, cash or *eree rukub* were visited by the appraisers (*amins*) who recorded every cultivator's field, estimating its extent, and remitted such portion of it as he considered had failed to bear crops. When these returns were received, measurers were sent out in bands of one *Darogah* and two assistants, to measure the lands. From the latter was deducted the quantity remitted, and the remainder was assessed by Government. But when the extent of land as estimated by the

*Amins* varied with the actual measurement of the *Darogah*, a proportional decrease was made in the remission, called *Bazyaft Pulo*, or refunded remission.<sup>3</sup> When all the documents were received by Government, the *Atsatah* or accounts of the season were made, and the zamindars, who paid monthly installments in advance, were then called on to pay any balance which may appear against them together with fees etc.

With *buttaee* lands when the crops were tolerably ripened, field watchmen were appointed who received Rs. 2 each per mensem from Government and subsistence from the cultivators, When the corn was ready, a *buttaedar* went to each granary, and first laid aside a portion, from which fees etc, were taken, and divided the balance between the Government and the cultivator, in the standard proportion of the village.

As the zamindars were compelled to meet extortion with evasion, the *Kasagee* rents were the most agreeable to them, as it opened the way for so much chicanery in the appraisal and measurement of the crops. The System of the *Amis* was to assess the lands at exorbitant rate, which the farmers could not pay with any profit to themselves, and then to bring it down by appraisal to the highest possible, standard at which the remuneration of the cultivators and the exactions of Government could in any way be effected. There was, as stated earlier, no regularity in assessment lands of the same village were paying *buttaee kasagee* and cash rents and the *eree rukub* was the standard rate in certain villages but in each the average market price was calculated from the records of different village in the vicinity. This, as, Mr. Frere said, if appraisal and the measurement could be honestly carried out, would evidently be the fairest mode of assessment that could be put in practice, both for the cultivator and for the Government.

We have already mentioned the various sources, besides land from which the Mirs derived revenue. The customs on river were always farmed<sup>4</sup> out to contractors. The duties were levied at different Ghauts on the Indus, and in a very regular manner. The town duty, farmed out, was a very profitable tax to the Government. It was difficult to draw a table of the rates at which the duties were levied. The imports were varied and the exports were principally grain, ghi, dried fruits etc. Taxes were collected by no fixed rules and fell most heavily on

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<sup>3</sup> "Thus in appraisal the land of A is entered as 12 beegas, of which 4 beegas are given in remission, and 8 beegas remain, on which rent is to be taken, but in actual measurement the land is found to be only 9 beegas the proportional remission on which would be only, 3 beegas; the difference of 1 Beega is therefore assessed, and entered as *Bazyaft Pulo*."

*Extract from rough notes H. B. E. Frere Commissioner in Sindh, 29th November 1853.*

<sup>4</sup> Given in auction to the highest bidder. Farming was practised all over Western India.

the Hindus. They were divided into three kinds *viz.*, *sarshumari*, or poll-tax upon artificers *bahrah*, or tax upon fishermen, and *pushkush* upon the Hindu traders. The *sarshumari*, being a tax on Musalmans, was more equitable than, the others it was taken from every shop, from Rs. 2 to Rs. 5 per annum according to the trade of the individual.<sup>5</sup> The *pushkush* upon the Hindus was taken in every town and village, which paid a certain sum annually, and the Hindus had to settle the proportion each had to pay among themselves. No alteration was ever made under any circumstances. The *bahrah* was taken from each band of fishermen (or *meeanee*), in the same way as the *pushkush*, the headman being responsible to Government and managed the proportional payment, but on the reduction of the band, diminutions were made in the tax. Sindh being an entirely agricultural country, the Amirs were wise in causing the pool-tax to fall on everyone except the cultivators.

The contract for the sale of liquor and drugs was always farmed out, but there were no very stringent rules to prevent smuggling, punishment was more severe than frequent. On fisheries and ferries Government received one-fourth of the produce and always sold its share in advance to the contractor. The Government share in the gardens was always so great that there was no encouragement to plant anything except date groves which required little care five-sixth was the usual share and never less than half. These were also sold by contract every season.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century the Mirs of Sindh were reputed to be very, wealthy. The annual revenue was estimated at 50 lakhs. Just before the conquest, however, it was computed not to exceed 35 lakhs. The hoarded wealth at Hyderabad when Napier went there was disappointing.<sup>6</sup>

There were three agricultural seasons, the *rabi* or spring, the *Peshrus* or middle and *Kharif* or autumn crop. The *rabi* cultivation was of three kinds, according to the nature of the soil, and the influence exercised upon it by the waters of inundation *viz.*

**1st Bosee:** Cultivation upon land left by the inundation, which, after ploughing and sowing, requires no further care in watering.

**2nd Sailabee:** Upon lands left by inundation, but of which the crop requires subsequent watering during growth.

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<sup>5</sup> "On his death if his son continued his business he paid the tax in his father's stead; but if he was too young to work at his trade, no tax was taken from him until he commenced working". Frere, op. cit.

<sup>6</sup> Aitkin Gazetteer of the Province of Sind. p 137



**3rd Khoosh Kdhakah:** Upon lands entirely dependent upon artificial irrigation both for early and subsequent watering.

In the autumn crop there are two distinctions:

**1st Mok,** or lands over which the water can flow from canals without further aid

**2nd Churkee,** for which Persian wheels are required to raise the water to the surface.

The irrigation, as before observed, is either from canals or wells, except the *Bosee* lands. For the clearing of the canals labourers were called for, each village furnishing a quota according to the quantity of land watered from the canal.

Among the most important implements of cultivation were the *Hur* or plough, which was made smaller than that used in India and it was drawn by two bullocks the *sahur*, or harrow which was a heavy log of wood, drawn by four bullocks, a man standing on each end of it the *datrah* was a curved hook used for reaping and the *kooriah* or hoe, a small implement for weeding etc.

The land was usually allowed to lie fallow for a year between the crops, except in cases of land freshly cleared from jungle, which was sown usually for two or three consecutive seasons at first. The Sindhis had no notion of the rotation, of crops but sometime where indigo had been sown they planted cotton to protect the latter from the sharp winds, by the short shooting stems of the indigo. Manure was used for some crops, but only, cattle-dung the waters of the inundation brought rich loomy matter, which was highly conducive to fertility. The stubble was also burnt and the ashes mixed with the soil. Salt was sprinkled over tobacco during its growth. Rice was sown in small patches, and later planted out with the hand. Sugarcane was also grown.

The administration of the country was entrusted to *Kardars* in charge of different districts. They were both revenue and judicial officers. The law was the *Koran*. The *Mirs*, though avaricious and bigoted, were not cruel. There were no political assassinations and the *Mirs* were averse to capital punishment. Mutilation, flogging, stocks and long imprisonment were the punishments. There were no proper jails and the next of kin were to feed the prisoners. Trial by ordeal was allowed. The husband could kill his wife for adultery. The liability for all stolen property rested on the village or estate in which the theft occurred until the steps of the thief were traced elsewhere. Thus it was in the interest of every zamindar to see that he harbored no thief within his limits. The police consisted of some miserable sowars at the chief towns but where every man carried arms and could

avenge himself police was superfluous. Capital offence were decided by the Mirs in person who also heard appeals against their *Kardars* in cases judged by them but both plaintiff and defendant had to pay highly for the hearing and still more for a verdict.

Sindh can be broadly divided into the lands that lay within the reach of the great Indus and the lands that lay beyond its domain the deserts. The deserts up to the time of the Talpurs had little share of the history of Sindh and no annals of its own. The nomadic herdsmen, who wandered over it, the petty chiefs of its scattered villages and the bands of raiders who found a refuge in it, were not brought under any regular authority. It was a no man's land.<sup>7</sup> The dominant race was the Rajputs before the Talpurs came. They were called Sodha.<sup>8</sup> The Ranas of Umerkot and Nangar, Parkar and Rattakot forts commanded the routes across the deserts.

The Talpurs built forts and levied duties on the merchandise that crossed the desert. But soon the desert became the refuge of raiders who attacked Cutch, Kaithawar and Guzerat For many years the local chiefs and heads of tribes were tolerably independent as time wore on, however, the power of the Talpur dynasty became consolidated in Sindh, and they gradually exerted themselves to bring this portion of their realm more under their immediate rule and for this purpose occasionally deputed some officer of rank, with a considerable force to levy contributions in Thar and Parkar and to teach the wild inhabitants of these districts that they must acknowledge the supremacy of the Talpurs.

With the view to the consolidation of their power in the desert, the Amirs of Sindh, towards the close of the last century, built and garrisoned several forts (Islamkote 1795, Mittee built a few years before Islamkote Nawakoe 1814 A.D. Singalla built about 1800 A.D. The second and the fourth forts could have cost 7 to 8 lakhs of rupees), in the desert at an enormous expense, after which they gradually introduced their revenue officers, levying a heavy tax on produce of the land.

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<sup>7</sup> "Hitherto these wild clansmen had things pretty much their own way, in true Highland fashion they were wont to sweep down upon the villages of the plain, killing men carrying off women and cattle looting and devastating as they went. Here spreading out into labyrinth of crag defile and mountain, they formed a succession of natural fortresses, the approaches to which were unknown to the outer world This great fastness known as the Cutchee Hills, was distant from Kurachee more than three hundred miles. *W. Butler, Sir Charles Napier op. cit. p 156*

<sup>8</sup> "The Sodas have been for several centuries past, the local chiefs or landed proprietors of the Thurr and Parkar districts; and besides the Muslim nomads and Bheel tribes indigenous to the locality and a mercantile community the population has been added to by the advent of the Norays, Raomas and Khosas from Sind." *S. N. Raikes Memories of the Thurr and Parkar Districts of Sindh, 1856.*

At the beginning of 1800 the rulers of, Sindh gradually consolidated their power in the Western portion of Thar where they supplanted the local chiefs, giving them, however, a small share of the revenue, probably because they were also Muslims. Further east, that is, in the Mittee and Islamkote Districts, under the protective forts, the Amirs' officers levied two-fifths of the produce of the land, leaving the chiefs nothing to live on but voluntary contribution of four annas (six pence) per field which the force of old association made the cultivators pay willingly to those whom they had long looked up to as their chiefs.<sup>9</sup> Further east, again, that is in the Verawow district and Parkar, the case was different, the chiefs had retained more of their native independence and were more powerful, the Khoas, moreover, were renowned for their deeds of arms and feared accordingly; and a force from Sindh coming to Parkar, they acknowledged the supremacy of the Amirs for the moment, but no sooner was it gone they reverted to their predatory habits. They carried their forays all throughout the desert. Another cause of their continued independence (eastern districts) was the proximity of the Mawar district of the Negur which much resembled the Thar, and was inhibited to plundering, while it formed a safe place of refuge to all who feared molestation in the Thar and Parkar.<sup>10</sup>

The rulers of Sindh mindful of the love of freedom, exhibited in this remote corner of their realm, did not attempt to introduce any revenue system, for many years, after it had been in force in other portions of Thar. And when eventually (in A D 1830 to 1835) they ventured to introduce it in a modified form, it gave rise to much discontent The revenue officers from Hyderabad being over-officious and obnoxious to the chiefs paid the penalty of their interference with their life. This act brought on the chief a terrible retribution from the Amirs. The Amirs roused to revenge laid waste the deserts and carried the chiefs into captivity. They were conveyed to Sindh and thrown into the fort of Kooda in the desert. Here very cruelly treated, they were made to agree to a very heavy fine which was fixed on them when liberated. Thence forth the Amirs received very regularly one-half of the custom duties, and about one-fifth of the produce of the land, though from what date this revenue was collected with tolerable regularity is not exactly known. At first, its collection was uncertain, but gradually became regular as the power of the rulers increased, and that of the local chiefs correspondingly decreased.

The taste of the desert marauders, even in site of the efforts of the Amirs, was felt by the British on their occupation of Kutch which was neighbouring to the districts of Thar marauders continued to lay waste the surrounding country. The

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<sup>9</sup> Capt S. N. Raikes op cit

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*

British met the situation when Sindh was just conquered. When the banditti was broken in Kutch and Kaithawar, Parkar became an outpost from where a watch kept to break the inroads of the bandit, and Parkar enjoyed peace and tranquility which she had not done in a century. Nothing of consequence happened thence onwards.

When Mountstuart Elphinstone became the Governor of Bombay (1820-1827) the relations between the Amirs and the British were considerably strained because of the constant forays into the Kutch by the Sindhians. There were occasions when the threatening attitude of the Amirs needed to be checked and at times the British were tempted to invade Sindh. But under the strict instructions of Lord Hastings peace was to be maintained at any price. Elphinstone being of the same opinion, the evil day was averted. Elphinstone wrote to Lord Hastings that even if the Amirs had been in Kutch at the head of a regular army all they could do was to beat them back: We had better, therefore, suit our language to our expected action.<sup>11</sup>

Sixteen years after Elphinstone had left India in 1827, Lord Ellenborough was the Governor General. The first hasty letter of the 5th March, congratulating Sir Charles Napier ended with, I must endeavor to make your success as extensively useful as possible<sup>12</sup> was followed in the next few days in a stream of dispatches nineteen of which reached him at Mirpur of the 31st, for Sir Charles the *piece of resistance* was the letter appointing him as the sole authority in the conquered territories, selecting as his assistants such offices as be thought fit. His pay was to be Rs. 2,500 beginning from 8th September 1842, the, day of his landing in Karachi, and it was left to him to suggest the remuneration of those appointed to civil posts.

The Governor General required a map showing the possessions of those Mirs who had been parties to hostilities and those who remained loyal, and an estimate of the value of each. Napier was to settle the boundaries of the new territories to occupy and how far were all left to his discretion. He was to decide the line of protection without leading to any further advance, to the west. As for the princes who had taken part, in the hostilities the only question was to what place, outside Sindh they should be removed.

Ellenborough threw out some suggestions for the method of administration. Like Elphinstone in western India he felt, it advisable to change as little as possible, at the beginning, except in the spirit of the Government. The Mir's system of

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<sup>11</sup> R. D. Choksey, *Mountstuart Elphinstone* (1796-1827) p. 331-335

<sup>12</sup> H. T. Lambrick, *Sir Charles Napier and Sind*. p 179.

farming out their revenues, though bad, must unavoidably be continued at first it would be well to divide the country into districts, placing over each an officer who was to control and prevent injustice by the middlemen and tax farmers while protecting them in the task of obtaining the revenue dues. These were the lessons of the past tried out elsewhere with fair success by the choice of able men. It was felt that Sir Charles would choose officers whose abilities and character would render them safe depositaries of great power. Napier had such men but he was not Elphinstone. At best he was only a crude soldier. Elphinstone, in spite of his great ability, did not succeed, Napier left Sindh in ruin.

Lord Ellenborough wrote to Napier on 12th April: *The abolition of transit duties will diminish the revenue but in Sindh we must do all for futurity, we have to create an Egypt, and we must not allow little views of present advantage to interfere with the realization of the greatest future objects....* He had, besides, decided that the Government of Bombay should in no way be concerned with the administration of Sindh which was to proceed in direct relation with himself. Sindh was to be governed from Calcutta.

By order of 2nd April the Province was to be divided into three Collectorates; two for lower Sindh and one in Upper Sindh. These were Shikarpur, Hyderabad and Karachi:

<b>Shikarpur</b>	..	..	..	<b>6,120 Square Miles</b>
Districts resumed from His Highness Mir Ali Murad, for the most part attached to Shikarpur about	..	..	..	<b>5,412 Square Miles</b>
<b>Hyderabad</b>	..	..	..	<b>30,000 Square Miles</b>
<b>Karachi</b>	..	..	..	<b>16,000 Square Miles</b>

The total number of square miles were therefore, **57,532**.

*Zillas* in Sindh exceeded in area those of the largest class in the old province. In population and revenue they ranked, lower and could be reckoned in the Bombay Presidency as *zillas* of middling or small size.

The people were principally Mahommedans, in the proportion of about four Muslims to one of any other, class.<sup>13</sup> This was a peculiarity in which the

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<sup>13</sup> Mr. Frere 1853

population was quite dissimilar from that of any part of Bombay Province. The people, according to Mr. Frere, were generally peaceable and well disposed, though far less civilized than the generality of Indian Population.

The collectors of revenue in these three *zillas* were appointed as magistrates also Lieutenant E. J. Brown was to be Commissioner for the civil administration of the whole Province and was aided by three collectors Captain Pope, Captain Preedy and Lieutenant Rathborne. Reporting to, Ellenborough Napier said: The arrangement will steer the ship for the present. The chief point is to prevent an extravagant government springing up. I mean to employ all the under-strappers that were employed by the Ameers. Such people have a habitual influence on society and a knowledge of official details that will be useful at the beginning, whereas if they were turned out they would have no occupation but to intrigue against us..... This is an echo of what Elphinstone did in the conquered territories of the Peshwa.

The Governor also issued a proclamation that no arrears of revenue due to the Talpur's government would be demanded by the British. If we promise not to do so we enlist a number of friends, who profit by our coming and will be opposed to the Ameers returning. I think this feeling worth the cost. He paid dearly for the generosity for he learnt that the *Kardars*, though forbidden by the proclamation not to collect any revenue before 17th February 1843, the *kardars* had levied it and pocketed the sum. Napier was anxious to make an example but felt that the only way to meet the situation was to increase the number of deputy collectors. He recommended six more officers in this grade and suggested good houses instead of the tents in which they lived. Ellenborough and his Council agreed. They recognised that during this early period of British rule in Sindh extensive British supervision was necessary; the native subordinates had much to unlearn and the British officers so much to learn.

Sir Charles believed that his arbitrary form of government would work smoothly. It was a military occupation mixed with a Sindhian system and the only change was the removal of the Amir and his favourites replaced by responsible officers who protected the people from the native oppressions by listening to their complaints. Yet, when the revenue was collected by the *Kardars*, instead of remitting the same, the *Kardais* exercised such influence that the ryots who suffered most from their tyranny feared to testify against them. Napier had implicit faith in his military officers and sought the soldiers to run the country. There was a dearth of good officers and most of them were needed for the army that could not be weakened at this early period of occupation. Hence Napier's administration remained weak. The Governor General advised the appointment of more army gentlemen in whom Napier, unfortunately had no faith. We shall

turn to the consequence of such an administration later. Let us now make an effort to study Sir Charles' struggle to establish the British rule in Sindh.

On 12th April to Lord Ellenborough: A temporary police force has been organised, tables of the revenue are gradually forming.... some portion of land have been already let to prevent the loss of crops, some contracts have been entered into but for short periods: I have, made these by auctions. I am going to issue a proclamation for the ryors to keep all their watercourses in order, and the *Kardars* to oversee the operations as usual and that Government will pay the expenses that were paid by the Amirs.

The transit duties abolished in Sindh to Napier were not important as revenue or as a subject of general complaint. They were a grievance only to the greater merchants, who traded with the adjoining countries, and even so were very generally evaded. The caravans avoided the towns en route where duties were collected: and being independent of roads this was easy for them to do so. The duties that were really felt as oppressive alike by cultivators, traders, graziers and artisans were the octroi of terminal taxes levied in every town on, everything brought in for sale. It was from these that the large revenue referred to by Captain Pope was raised; and it was this grievance felt by the whole population - that the Governor General obviously intended to remove. Sanction was also given to Napier's proposal to have a separate collector of customs appointed at Karachi, rather grudgingly, because the new post carried a salary of Rs. 800 per month. For some time now the Central Government at Calcutta was aware of the heavy expenditure incurred by the Government in Sindh.

Lord Ellenborough had lately received a letter from the Chairman of the Court of Directors expressing the hope that there was some prospect of revenue in Sindh, to meet the expenditure, which could not fail to be large, for a long time to come. The Governor General had already more than once tried to soothe, the anxiety of the Court by passing on Sir Charles Napier's confident expectations of surplus revenue from the new Province. But those hopes seemed constantly to recede. Ellenborough and his colleagues could no longer disguise for themselves the fact that the charge of administering the Government of Sindh was increasing beyond original calculations. They admitted as much to Napier still there was no avoiding the duty of giving people a just Government and the fact that Sir Charles saw only, these means implementing it was enough. So the Governor General and his Council contented themselves with the writing We are satisfied that your Excellency will always bear in mind the necessity of strict economy whenever it can be attended to without affecting vital objects. We are most desirous of conducting the administration on large views of public policy in an enlightened spirit towards the people, and in a large spirit towards all those we employ, but without a constant regard to economy we should soon become

utterly unable to affect these good purposes. To the end of the British rule many of these pious wishes remained great expectations. In justice to Sir Charles he was in possession of a country of which he knew nothing, neither the people nor the language, geography, customs etc., and hence the task governing Sindh was indeed, difficult. It was so, every where the British power spread.

The Governor General still had faith; the figures appearing against Sindh in the Calcutta Audit office - the draft on Bombay and Bengal by money bills or by specie (—) would surely disappear.

Meanwhile the Province could be carried by the increased profits from the opium trade with China. The sins of imperialism had begun. A policy which was to leave the world in shambles. We are even today paying the price of those sins

Everywhere the British were champions of vested interest. The policy was to carry the favour of those who were in authority and pose as the champions of the underdog. Even in Western India the approach was built on the rich; the poor continued to remain poor and the country faced progressive poverty. Here in Sindh it was the same-story.

It was Napier's object to conciliate the Baluch feudal chieftains and through them their followers by attaching their interests to the British rule. This could be done by granting them permanence of tenure in jagirs which they held under the Talpurs during pleasure. At the same time he proposed to take some equivalent in rent for the military or other services to the Mirs which the old grants involved and which was no longer required. Lord Ellenborough cordially approved of the policy. The Baluch chiefs and their followers therefore assembled at various places and received the title deeds from the honour of the British officers.

In both India and Europe the conquest of Sindh was condemned and it was felt that a fierce Baluch rising was in the offing. Sir Charles had his admirers as well as his critics as all successful men have and he keenly resented the strictures against Ellenborough and himself. He did every thing to vindicate their conduct, especially of the Governor General. He firmly believed that Lord Ellenborough shared with him all the improvements in Sindh. More on these improvements later. His main critics were the administrators of the older Provinces and sometime even those who worked under him. Of the neighbouring civilians in Bombay he wrote:

*The civil servants of Bombay, not Sir George Arthur, are watching this Government like the harpies of the ancients; and the moment I go, or rather Lord Ellenborough goes, the whole will be changed to an enormously expensive civil Government, innumerable branches will extend from the foul stem of the Bombay*



*tree. All Sons, nephews and friends of the Bombay Civil servants will be provided for, each idle head of a department will have what they call an establishment... if I show that it can be governed for one hundred thousand pounds a year while its revenue is four hundred thousand, and will be a million, besides pointing out and even initiating many public works, I shall have done as much for Scinde as I can do..... but be sure I will not move while of any real use.*

This was put decently; Sir Charles could be very nasty. He abhorred politicians, described old Indians (in a demi official letter) as a set of old bitches who God is mammon and young civilians as very good fellows, who smoke, hunt hogs race, drink beer and issue their orders in bad Hindustanee to a sub-servant set of native clerks. So he had, as we know determined to govern the country through military officers and what is, indeed, surprising congratulated them and himself for the near ruin in which they left the country. When Mr. Frere came he had quite a few things to say about the Sindh he saw. Even the very able Elphinstone, in spite of such hard work, was a failure in several directions.

Napier had a difficult task there is no doubt. He had both the army and the civil administration to look after and as a European a difficult climate to live in.<sup>14</sup> In a letter to his sister: Reflect that I am supreme judge and arbitrary in all political relations; Commander-in-Chief with two other Commanders-in-Chief troublesome enough in their way, Governments to correspond with, an enemy on the borders, a people to keep quite ..... all this in a sun so debilitating that no young man even pretends to do much. Judicial cases, court martial, commissariat, and the military engineers' work made great demand on his time, his happier hours were those devoted to the development of the country. If success does not sit in judgment on Napier, and intentions alone matter, then it must be said in justice, he did his best.

Captain Baker and his assistants had been continuously hard at work at the survey and its first fruits were soon laid before the Government; a memorandum on irrigation of Sindh; a report on the canals west of Indus; a project for the road

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<sup>14</sup> "What life in Scinde meant to Napier in this hot season of 1844 we gather from a letter written in June to his brother: "*The Bengal troops in Shikarpoor are in open mutiny*" he writes "*and I am covered with boils that have for three weeks kept me in pains and eight days in bed.*" This with the heat and an attack of fever has made me too weak to go to Shikarpoor for the sun is fierce up the river; many have been struck down by it last week and it would be difficult for me to bear second rap. Still I would risk it, but that a storm seems brewing at Mooltan and this extraordinary change of Governors will not dispel it. To me it also appears doubtful if the Sikhs would pour sixty or seventy thousand men over the Sutlej whether Gough has means to pull them up. I am therefore nursing myself to be able to bolt northwards when we can act, which is impossible now - three days under canvas would kill half the Europeans"

*Sir Charles Napier* - Sir William F. Butler, P 154

between Sukkur and Shikarpur; and finally a scheme with plans and estimates for, bringing water from the little hill streams to supply the camp at Karachi. The surveyors were busy taking levels along the canals, making rough maps of forests and lands in various parts of the Province and carrying route surveys along the western border.

Napier sought, at times, popularity with the people at the cost of the officers. He felt his main duty was to alleviate oppression of the common people, Preedy, forbade pearl fishery. Napier was furious with him: I was forced to tear his dignity to rag before the *canaille* by telling the fishermen to laugh at any Collector or any other *saheb* who attempted such control: One other Collector recommended a tax on the import of gain. The Governor himself wanted to support 'landed interests'; he declared that his aim was to make Sindh grain too cheap for importers to survive. This rough and ready manner of a soldier would injure the smooth working of his administrations and lose the confidence of the executive. There are ways of administrating correction without losing the goodwill of those who work with you.

Corrupt or oppressive subordinates had short shift at Napier's hands, '*kardars* and policemen I smash by dozens', he wrote, with grim satisfaction. Regarding an incident of oppression in a village by a policeman, Napier wrote he had the man sent to the village where he was stripped and received two dozen lashes and then turned loose. His biographer wrote: Napier was very arbitrary. He took pride in punishing the Government officers with the hope that such an attitude would prevent tyranny and make the people happy and render public servants honest. Indeed a most doubtful way of administrating justice. Such an attitude would surely sap the foundations of Government. He sought cheap popularity.

He was stupid enough to state that men came from afar and squat down fifty yards from my tent to see their King. This tickled his pride and to win cheap popularity he ill, treated his officers. To make matters worse he was never sure of the truth of the charges made by the natives, he said such liars, and so bad at explaining that were their language understood by me it would be hard to reach facts. What justice can be expected at the hand of this man who was known to say: I listen to nothing and make prisoners all accused; condemn without proof, punish without mercy. He then reaches to the height of absurdity: Obey me! Do what you like, rob, murder, anything that I have not forbide, all things, unless I have said no! He must be a sadist. We read of instances in which he took no legal opinion and delighted in punishing. Had up two villains of jagirdars, took their immense jaghirs from them left them in irons, ordered their servants to be flogged, and will hang their five friends ... I have also inflicted a heavy fine on these villains, and I think they will not forget the Shaitan-ka-Bhae.... The devil's brother that is how Napier was known to the Baluchis. To imagine such a beast,

not the first of his kind, to rule an unfortunate people. Such incidents were common in Anglo-Indian history.

During the year 1845 the Governor considered the means of reducing the burden of taxation in Sindh. It was now twelve months since Napier had requested for the manner in which land revenue was collected and assessed and the effects of any change he had introduced. Preedy's first report on the Mirs' land revenue system, submitted in July 1843, had disclosed a formidable degree of complication and variety. Different soils, different crops, different modes of irrigation, were differently assessed. As many as eight small deductions were made from the total produce under various names, some reasonable others not. Most of these petty cesses fell on the poor cultivator. The abolition of these petty duties, said Preedy, would be a boon to the whole population. The revenue officers with more experience realized the interdependence of these curious items and their integration in the rural economic structure of the country.

Sir Charles was not to be hurried into drastic changes. In the first two years only a few of the least justifiable of the petty cesses were abolished. He wrote in December 1844: My resolution is to lower taxation. Where we water the land the tenant pays half his produce in rent: Where he waters it himself, the Government *sirkar* takes one-third or two-fifths. This must be reduced but with caution. Six months later we read I am afraid to remove an unjust tax until it can be supplanted by a just one; a new one, even though just, may give urbage to these, wild people; they would rather bear a heavy unjust one that had always been than a light one if new. This pious wish to lessen the burden of taxes was also felt on the occupation of the Peshwas' dominions. But in spite of the revised land revenue in 1838 the rates of assessments, instead, of being lowered, showed that the land revenue was higher than before. It was the experience of the ryot that under the guise of reassessment the Government seldom or ever lessened the land revenue; and there is ample proof to show that the revised rates were invariably higher than the old. The East India Company could never bear a loss in revenue.

In Sindh, it was more so, in light of the general financial position. Napier's natural inclination to seek popularity would incline him to lighten the taxes but the political necessity to show a favorable balance sheet held him in check. The cost of civil administration had inevitably increased with the expansion of the canal department, which was essential for drawing out the rich potential of the country, but its operation could bring no quick result. The heavy drain on Indian revenue was from the salaries paid to the civil servants. A scale of pay that has never-been paid in any country in the world. In Sindh the saving factor was the soldier civilian who it appears was paid less than the civilian elsewhere. Napier complained of the loss to the army of good officers; besides the Directors lost

their patronage for, all officers were appointed by, the Governor General. This had led to a acrimonious controversy in the press.

The Governor General's instructions had been to make no changes in the Talpur's administration beyond remedying flagrant inequities. The division of produce between Government and tenant remained as of old Garden crops were assessed on cash rates. But on all other grain between on third and one half share of Government was changed into cash by the Collector. Grain was a circulating medium; the village servants were paid in it. Most of the harvest was consumed by the ryor. The Government owned more than half the grain sold. The Collector was reduced to the position of a corn merchant and had to behave like one; looked to the amount of crops, saw the outturn in the district, studied supply and demand, and what prices ruled and arranged his sales accordingly. The Collector, therefore, in 1844 withheld the Government grain from the market till the prices soared to four or five hundred percent and the poor man was almost crushed under the weight of the soaring prices. This was done to show this artificial rise in prices in the Sindh statement of receipts and disbursement. When, the stores were actually opened a great deal of the grain was spoilt; but prices immediately fell by half. The situation was, indeed, trying because of bad administration.

Uptil the end of 1845, the Talpur system of taxing internal trade had been preserved, and, if anything, extended. The town duties in Hyderabad were made to include a tax on every article purchased, in the town or camp. The duties had also to be paid by Government servants, military and civil like the native population. And a single article at time had to pay a tax thrice over. It was hard to believe that the Governor could have approved of this vexatious mode of taxation. The Collector wrote: *I hope now all, both high and low, will be compelled to taste the bitterness of this demand system and the thing will soon be knocked on the head...:* It was under Napier's consideration since it hit the soldier because of its extension to the camp. An official wrote to a relative: The wretchedness and misery throughout Sindh caused by the horrible offensive Government of Sir Charles Napier is beyond belief. The damned system of town duties meanwhile continued. The British administration, especially economic, was uniformly bad everywhere but in Sindh it drew more attention.

It was the Bombay army that formed the Sindh garrison and hence the Bombay Government complained to the Government of India. Napier wrote to the Bombay Government when the Central Government sent to Sir, Charles the minutes of the Bombay Governor and his Council. Sir Charles said that he had always brought his Collectors in contact with the commissariat and denied that the prices were manipulated by the Collectors. They were determined by the presence of demand and supply. We already know how demand and supply was

handled by the Collector in the grain market. Either Napier did not understand what was being done or was totally ignorant of how to govern. The later may be more likely. He, therefore, said he had done all to lower, the prices of grain and remove taxes on the import of grain. This was, as we know, still there in 1845. His plea why cultivation in Sindh had been less than normal was war, plundering of grain, severe epidemic and scarcity in 1843; a plague of locust and a sudden fall in the river disappointed all expectations in 1844.

Napier claimed that cheaper grain was brought to Sindh market from Bahawalpur and Guzerat. He did not mention that his Government taxes the importation of grain from the other parts of the country. He refused to believe that the military charges against Bombay were added to in order that, the revenue of Sindh might appear in a favorable light; not was the grain issued at higher rates, than those prevailing according to the natural state of the market. He defied the Bombay Council to prove its case. The much harassed Governor of Sindh wrote that when he had so much to do and think I am to force myself to think and write and dwell upon villainy and folly past all belief and beyond my power to chastise. Even the best of suggestions made in good faith to help his government were regarded by Sir Charles as personal hostility on the part of the Bombay Government. He regarded the Bombay Times as his worst enemy. At one time he was in favour of the acts of public men being freely discussed in public papers. But now the Bombay Times was far below the standard of journalism as Sir Charles was above the common run of public men; the case was therefore altered. He was seeking measures to stern the tide of criticism against his Government.

The close of the year 1845 saw the long postponed administrative reforms in the Amended Revenue Regulations for the Province drawn up by the Governor and the Secretary to the Government assisted, by the three Collectors. The poll tax on Hindu and Mahomedan artisans was at last abolished. All town duties, 'except such as may be levied for Municipal purposes', and all 'internal customs' on import and export were to be levied on the frontier, at the Bombay rates. The import of foreign grain was also to be taxed, though the Governor reserved the right to suspend the levy in times of scarcity.

The remaining regulations relate to the management of the land revenue which had hitherto continued as in the days of the Talpurs, though some of the small charges on the produce deemed inequitable or unnecessary were stopped to relieve the ryor. The share in produce was consolidated in a deduction of 6.6percent. *Kardars* received their pay in grains from this share. If it was less the rest was made up from those who had a surplus. Six percent was charged on cash rents where levied-principally in Upper Sindh. These cash assessments were not adjusted to difference in the soil but fixed at flat rates for Lower and Upper

Sindh respectively. Water rates were levied in lands irrigated by Government canals, the amount left at the Collector's discretion pending the organization of the Council Department.

Napier lay down that one third of the annual produce should be the maximum 'rent' to be paid by the cultivator. Standard land measurement the *bigah* (half acre) and *guz* (yard), were prescribed. For canal clearance an exception was made to the general rule that all labors should be free and allowed to find its own value. The Collectors were to fix a tariff rate as a matter not to be left to the choice but regulated by the average price of labour in their districts. There were provisions for the encouragement for extending cultivation. For new wells, probably constructed for watering new lands, the Government would give a premium and even advance money for the work, at the Collector's discretion, and leases of waste lands requiring of clearing jungle and digging of Irrigation facilities were to be given for twenty years, the first two free of rent, provided that in the third year the whole area was found satisfactorily cultivated. Such concessions were granted by the Talpur to the cultivators themselves. The Collectors were to use their endeavors to have the boundaries of the field marked out by the most suitable means.

Napier was anxious to make loans to poor but reliable men for the purchase of the bullocks and the like without such assistance and encouragement the poor feel no confidence in, and no attachment to, their Government.<sup>15</sup> No interest charged on the loan till repayment was overdue; but repayment was strictly exacted. Napier intended that this system gradually replace the Talpur practice of remissions of revenue on failure of crops. His loan system would be open to no such objection; but he was wrong if he felt that the Sindhi peasant in spite of his 56percent of the gross produce for his share will save in time of plenty to pay of debts incurred in bad years. Herein the Sindhi belonged to the common family of peasants all over the country. The American cotton boom, during the American Civil War, was no more helpful to the Decean peasant, who (saw his best years during 1860-65) was heavily in debt just a decade later. But to Sir Charles occasionally a bankruptcy meant no loss to Government; it was a mere

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<sup>15</sup> "The Indian system seems to be the crushing of the native plebeian and supporting the aristocrat who reason and fact tell us, is our deadly enemy. He always must be for we step in to his place. The riot is ruined by us though willing to be our friend. Yet he is the man to whom we must trust for keeping India – and the only one who can take it from us, if we ill-use him, for then he joins his hated natural chief. English and Indian may be amalgamated by just and equal laws until we are no longer strangers. The final result of our Indian conquest no man can predict, but if we take the people by the hand we may count on ruling India for ages. Justice rigid justice, even severe justice-will work miracles. India is safe if so ruled, but such deeds are done as to make me wonder that we hold it a year".

W. F. Butler (Sir Charles Napier) p 155, 156.

nothing to the moral effect on the people at large especially in a conquered country. And the increased comfort and well-being to the laboring class will repay tenfold such trifling loss.

Like the *mirasdar* in the Deccan or the *Khote* in the Konkan the *zamindir* in Sindh was to Sir Charles a mere middleman between the Government and the ryot. Such middlemen '*were the curse of every country*' and, in Sir Charles view arose '*from the evil of having over-grown landed proprietors*'. The *Khotes* were an excellent example of these over grown proprietary rights in the Konkan. They were mere land revenue collectors to the Maratha Government who posed as the owners of land when the British came.<sup>16</sup> So whenever a *jagir* was resumed, the land was divided into small leaseholds of five to seventy five acres and on occasion to exceed 250. Similarly the purchasers of the new lands were to be content with their holdings. It is very desirable to introduce some fixed tenure of land into Sindh. To take property from all was the law of the Ameers. But our rule should be to give property to all, and to secure its enjoyment. Napier, therefore, directed his officers '*to recollect how great an inconvenience it is for any man to pay taxes.*' Public servants encountering ill temper among the taxed were to use the greatest civility and good humor especially at the frontier posts. It is an ill governed country when stranger meets with insolence and injustice on the threshold.

In 1846 Napier gave the management of irrigation to the Canal Department. So far the *Kardars* had performed the task of keeping the canals clean now a few British military officers with fewer Indian surveyors were in charge. Few understood these duties and the absence of British officers, often on military duties made the work of the Canal Department more difficult. The *Kardars* who had so far made large profits in keeping the canals free from silt were critical and unhelpful. And a spirit of dissatisfaction with the working of the department spread higher-up the revenue hierarchy. The rivalry between the Collectors and the Canal Department was thus coeval with British rule. The work of the Collectors was hampered by constant inquiries which could not be answered without reference to the Collector's records.

In spite of these administrative difficulties Sir Charles said: *Hitherto the Indus has created and destroyed the harvest at caprice... now with our system of sluices, all the great feeders will become long tanks plentifully supplying the grain by little field drains till ripe, when sluices will be opened and the canals cleaned out ... the people will soon find that they have, a command of water in the higher grounds, where they now cannot keep the water or do not get it at all, they see the good of the new plan ... I thus hope to see next year the first action of my sluice system begun...* Sir. Charles hoped that in

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<sup>16</sup> *Economic Life in the Bombay Konkan* (1818-1939) Chapter III, p 30-47

the next ten or twenty years Sindh would become a vast farm for cotton indigo and wheat ... *I defy any man to doubt the riches of an alluvial soil with a hot sun, and good scientific irrigation.*

In August 1846 Sir Charles found it necessary to define the rules for employing labour in Sindh, for though they had seen repeatedly inculcated by the Governor, they do not seem to have been attended to sufficiently. No man was to work except at the rate of wages which he might agree upon with his employers and which must be left to the influence of supply and demand the Government must make its own bargain with individuals. Where labour had to be impressed for emergent work (such as a canal clearance) the men were to be paid at the local market rate wages whatever the cost may be to the public. This was good on paper. Actually, both European and Native authorities, whenever and wherever possible, kept this rule in breach. The ryot or the native laborer was abused in all manners of means. The 'beggari system', as it was called in Deccan, was rampant and labour was pressed into free service for the 'Shaib' by his native minions all over the country. A fair wage for a fair days work was only a talk to silence the prick of conscience or loud criticism. Till very recent times, under the British the approach of a Collector, and even today, in independent India, a minister, in the vicinity of a village is a curse. The legacy of a 'Shaib' continues, to dog our steps till today.

The Governor of Sindh deluded himself as so many of his countrymen did all over India: The poor of Scinde have now justice, work, high wages; the rich have all they had, and more, for they can now keep their riches; the merchant have security; all have gained by the vast diminution of taxation, and twenty thousand soldiers spend money amongst them. But the, most remarkable aspect of the new rule was that even the Company should rejoice that the revenue account for the year 1845-46, the receipts amounted to over thirty lakhs of rupees, a substantial improvement on the previous year. Indeed, a magician had waved his wand-happy Sindh! The magician wrote: Our increase is apparently very regular. The first year the revenue was at the rate of 18 lakhs for we did not commence collection until June. The next year was quiet and more experience gave 27 lakhs, this year we have five lakhs more ... the Collectors think it will increase to a 100 lakhs in few years. Sindh is a rich conquest. He wished to have all these figures published in England, figures totally false to throw dust in the eyes of his countrymen. In 1846 a statement of accounts had been laid before the Parliament in response to reiterated requests; and these told a very, different tale. They were derived from Calcutta statistical office, which was totally immune from Bombay influence; the receipts of 1843-44 were nine lakhs not eighteen; 1844-45 twenty seven; 1845-46, twenty eight. As against this intake the disbursement for these years amounted to seventy six, fifty eight and sixty eight lakhs respectively, this expenditure being exclusive of the pay and allowances of regular troops serving



in Sindh which merged in the ordinary military charges. In other words, the rich conquest had in these three year run up a debt of 138 lakhs of rupees. Little wonder that Lord Ripon demurred to promulgate the accounts emanating from Government House, Karachi; for those in Parliament urge that the Province be restored to the Mirs.

The drain on Indian resources was applied to Sindh in heavy expenditure in maintaining a Government beyond the country's resources, in paying a scale of pay that was paid nowhere in the world by which the servants of the Company lined their pockets and corrupt Indian minors aided and abated these European marauders in a loot unprecedented in history. The Poverty of Sir Charles' administration was revealed by individuals making a fortune by corrupt practice. There is an example of the Governor's *munshi* Mirza Akbar Ali who was possessed of a private fortune of a lakh of rupees and this was remitted to Bombay from Sindh by him in 1843. The *munshi* when questioned called it his patrimony and Napier the Bombay malice. Elated with the success of a steamer making its passage between Karachi and Indus Napier wrote: the devil will drive trade like fire. This will give the lie to the rascals who are running down this country. Napier refused to believe that his administration was to blame and not his critics. Sir Charles was, at times, incorrigible.

The jagirs were a subject which required to be tackled. At some place immense portions of jagir land remained uncultivated. Both Sir Charles and his officers were confused about the rights of property in land itself with the right to its revenue. In Sindh the jagirdar stands in the place of Government which alienated to him its on right to the revenue of the lands in the tract that constituted his jagir. The proprietary and heritable right over the land itself - subject to payment of revenue vested in the zamindar whether in 'jagir' or in 'Government' lands. The peasant cultivator if not himself the owner of zamindari right, was a tenant-at-will of the zamindar, entitled to merely half the produce of the field which he cultivated. Napier was inclined to regard the jagirdars as the proprietors of land and wished to make them more independent of their zamindars by enabling the former to eject the latter when they do not properly cultivate the lands. Yet the zamindar was to Sir Charles to be more protected and in fact more the proprietor of land than jagirdars. But the Collectors were informed that the governor was averse to maintain the zamindari system and was in favour of *rayot wari* settlement as in Madras. Sir Charles forgot the vast difference in the physical and social conditions and traditional institutions of the two Provinces. He was anxious that the jagirdars adopt the *rayot wari* settlement in their jagirs. Because of the diversity of jagirs in Sindh they were divided into three classes. First class was those that were held uninterruptedly in a family for 20 years before the battle of Miani. The second class was granted jagirs within 20 years of the conquest. The third class were jagirs or portions of them granted in lieu of pay to

civil officers or soldiers of the Mirs no longer in Government service; these were to be resumed on the death of the existing holders. It was left to the jagirdars to accept those terms.

Sir Charles was relentless in punishing slavery and wife murder, two well established customs not to be put down but by a strong hand. Some of his manifestos became classical. The most characteristic is the order against reckless driving: Gentlemen as well as beggars may, if they like, ride to the devil when they get on horseback; but neither gentlemen nor beggars have a right to send other people there. His police system was much admired. It had put a stop to gang robbery and all the more daring violations of the rights of property; cattle-stealing, however, hardly regarded by the people as a crime and murders, generally arising from quarrels about women were commoner crimes than elsewhere in India, and occurred, perhaps, oftener in the thinly populated districts on the banks of the river. The organised police force was 2,400 armed men under military officers and independent of the Collector. The army was untouched by law and order. Thereby were established two rival forces while the police inform us of the cheating of *Kardars*, *Umbardars* and zamindars, these people complain of the usual faults of the policemen namely, overbearing insolence. In this manner they keep each other in check and both take the part of the poor, not out of humanity but spite. The boon of the rule of law and order was the best blessing of the British rule in India.

The Collectors and his Deputies were magistrates, as well as collectors of revenue, but their powers very limited. Every decision of a Deputy was to be confirmed by the Collector and the proceedings in all cases were ultimately sent to the Judge Advocate General, a Captain versed in law, who, with his two Deputies at Hyderabad and Shikarpur acted as a kind of Court of revision. In all cases of serious crime a preliminary inquiry was held by the Collector, who then submitted the case to the Judge Advocate General, who submitted them to the Governor, who decided whether to order a trial by a military Commission or not. The decision of the Military Commission was not final, but required the confirmation of the Governor, One wonders how justice ever got done at all. Besides, the great evil most loudly complained of, and one of the great obstacles to a good system of criminal justice, was the immense distances which parties and witnesses had to travel to reach the Court of justice. The only way to meet this was to increase the judicial powers of the Native officers. But there was a grave doubt as to whether the experiment of vesting judicial powers in the Natives was likely to succeed but so marked have been the good effects, that I do not find a single dissentient voice on the subject, and all are desirous to see those powers gradually extended wrote Mr. Frere who succeeded Napier as the Commissioner of Sindh.

Sir Charles' generosity to the Balochi Chiefs soon attached them to the British rule. But his main work was the defence of the frontiers to which he bent his mind. Fortifications in all directions were constructed and manned. Larkana, Khairo Garhi, Rojan and Khangur were all stationed with troops, but plunderers ravaged the country. No honest men's life was safe. In 1845 an expedition to break the stronghold of these marauders was led by Sir Charles himself<sup>17</sup>. The Bagtis were the worst. They hid in the jungles along the Indus and the hills. Sir Charles even removed entire tribes and settled them elsewhere to cripple their menace. At one time the Bagtis came in large numbers within 15 miles of Shikarpur and carried away 15,000 head of cattle. Even a cavalry sent in pursuit was afraid to attack them. In 1847 Captain John Jacob was sent in command of the Sindh Irregular Horse on the difficult mission of the pursuit of these tribes. Captain Jacob worked his will in an offensive manner, protected British and Native alike from plunder and murder and the Sindh horse in groups patrolled all parts of the frontier attacking the marauders in all directions.

Napier had to struggle against the sense of frustration. I have no longer the excitement of work to keep up my sprits; the Government of Scinde is the web of Penelope. What I do is to be undone. Yet the economic condition was not one of despair. Imports were stimulated by the presence of troops, exports of wool from Baluchistan were increasing steadily, the leather manufacturers relieved of taxation were flourishing, the long-vexed frontier of Upper Sindh was quiet, within the Province there was tranquility and a moderate prosperity.

In spite of this slight rosy picture there were of course classes that remained dissatisfied – Pirs, Syeds, and other religious classes, the heads of tribes and Baluchis in general who lost their old consequence and were leveled in law with the lowest, also the Amil class of Hindus who were of consequence in administration and business with opportunities of enriching themselves at public expense had been replaced by British officials or their native minions. Those in British service were reduced in position and emoluments. Farmers of revenue and great merchants with ruling families had suffered from the change. The artificers who ministered to the rich and the idle retainers of the Mirs and nobles alike yearned for the return of the old rulers. But that was not to be, the change was as thorough as that effected by the fall of the Peshwa among the Marathas.

If the vested interests felt their loss keenly, the cultivators, shopkeepers, the middle and lower class had come by, some distinct advantages. They had gained by a certain control over forced labour, by equality before law, the removal of the poll tax and other injurious imposts. They were surprised that the officers were willing to listen to their grievances, though often ignorant of the real woes of the

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<sup>17</sup> A graphic description of this expedition is given by Sir Butler in his Life of Napier.

ryots, were impartial and tried to decide everything according to merit. The British rule at its best was a mixed blessing. Its blessings were few but its woes were many.

Napier was spared no criticism of his conquest and administration of, Sindh till his departure. In this he was singularly unfortunate. There were many who had committed worse sins and escaped the lash of misfortune. Both at home as in India Napier knew no peace. His ardent admirer Sir William Butler wrote: *There was to be no mercy for this man who had not only dared to condemn the abuses of power, but had added the insult of smiting his opponents with the keen Damacles blade of his genius.* To Butler Sir Charles had committed that sin which power never pardons the championing of the poor and oppressed against the rich and ruling ones of the earth. This championing in the story of Sindh that is to follow. Sir Charles left India in October 1847; he was destined to return for a very short spell as the Commander of the Indian army to retrieve the fortunes of his country against the redoubtable Sikhs. But hardly had he returned when Sir Gough defeated the Sikhs at the battle of Guzerat. The purpose of Sir Charles' return was defeated.

Sindh was attached to Bombay, the Governor Mr. George Clerk, was requested to communicate to the Government of India his views on the administration of Sindh. He ordered Mr. Pringle to collect the necessary Information in February 1848. Mr. Clerk found fault with Mr. Pringle for consulting only Napier's civil officers who he said had preconceived notions and whose unconscious bias led them unwittingly to keep away defects which ought to be prominently brought forward. Though in ill health and saw only Hyderabad and Karachi Mr. Clerk's minute on Sindh reveals his acute observations and the justice of almost all his conclusions was borne out by subsequent experiences. It is evident that the minute expressed his considered personal views and that the censure and praise are given on public grounds alone.

The system of collecting the revenue was condemned by Mr. Clerk The Collectors expressed their opinion on trade in corn to Pringle that it was necessary that Government give up its present function as the principal corn dealer in the Province Clerk ordered that all Government grain be disposed in auction sales and efforts be made to substitute short-term leases for fixed rates, whether in grain or cash with zamindars as head of the communities. This would only be done after a proper revenue survey. The survey be undertaken by the Canal Department provided they were freed from the annual clearance of the canals.

Yet the amounts of revenue could not be ascertained, but the expenditure had been extravagant the collection of revenue had been in the hands of *Kardars* whose exactions there were no means of controlling. The Commissariat

department was swindled by contractors to the tune Rs. 6 lakhs. There was no official list of Jagirdars, nor had their titles and claims been settled. The machinery of civil justice was tolerable that of criminal justice had, the canals had deteriorated and the forest recklessly destroyed. Reforms were introduced to meet the deteriorating situation by Mr. Clerk. Military commission abolished and criminal and civil justice was commuted to four grades of courts, those of the *Kardars*, Deputy Magistrates, Magistrates and Commissioner. The Commissioner was given a judicial assistant. A seven years revenue settlement made in the year Mr. Pringle was appointed Commissioner, based on cash payment equivalent to share of the crops at assumed prices.

Clerk saw that many of the revenue officers were ill fitted for their duties; he was shocked that they were unable to speak or even understand Sindhi. He made the Sindhi language the medium of official business and all civil officers were to pass an examination in it. Clerk found many of Napier's departments overstaffed.

The accounts of the revenue and disbursement, maintained by the treasurer in Karachi, proved a complete puzzle to the Governor of Bombay; and when he inquired an explanation on certain items they were often at a loss to explain. He discovered that there was a balance in the audited expenditure to the extent of ten lakhs of rupees, but this he knew, was as nothing to the sums received by the Province in specie by bills, remittances, transfer of payments, and the like from Bengal as well as his own Presidency. The military expenditure in Sindh averaged over seventy lakhs of rupees annually on the books of the Bombay Presidency alone. The extra allowances granted to the troops serving in Sindh amounted to 3½ lakhs per annum. Clerk felt that this was a colossal waste and quite a substantial portion of these Sindh troops ought to be dissolved. The charges until the year 1847 averaged over Rs 15,00,000 annually; they then fell by half – a decrease far greater than was warranted by the reduction of the garrison. It was mainly due to the control and increased vigilance of the controlling officers. By the time Clerk visited Sindh his Commissioner had revealed a lamentable extent of Peculation. Mr. Pringle due to some dissatisfaction resigned in 1850, but in the meantime large reforms had been inaugurated.

Though Mr. Frere was only 35 years old and there were objections to his appointment on the score of youth, Lord Falkland, Governor of Bombay, knowing Mr. Frere's work at Satara<sup>18</sup> in difficult times got his appointment confirmed. The event proved his sagacity for it is impossible to exaggerate the effect of his administration during 1851 to 1859. He was a gifted administrator for able men loved to work under him; he never interfered where he trusted. He

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<sup>18</sup> See *Raja Shahji of Satara*. R. D. Choksey.

could come by money for all his farsighted schemes. But in spite of the reforms of Sir George Clerk Sindh was far from a bed of roses.

Mr. Bartle Frere himself left it on record that in 1851 when he came to Sindh there was not a mile of bridged or of metal led road not a masonry bridge of any kind in fact not five miles of any cleared road, only a set of barracks of higher class than 'temporary', not a single *dawk bungalow*, *serai* or *dharmshala* or district *Katcherry*; but one market place and not a Courthouse, lock-up or police station or office of any kind. And this comment is confirmed by John Jacob with the exception of the mole of Kurrachee no public works of real utility were executed during the whole administration of Sir Charles Napier. A partial explanation of his fruitlessness may be found in Sir Charles' aversion to working through men who understood the country and its people any better than himself. In spite of the emphasis on the knowledge of the language by Sir Clerk, Frere found only two among the Civil servants who could speak Sindhi language. The others carried on their work in *bad Hindustanee* interpreted to the people in Sindhi or recorded in Mongrel Persian, most of the employed did not know their job and to teach them meant taking another individual from his employment. An example of this eccentric regime is given in a sentence of a letter to Major Jacobs by Major General Hunter you have now sole command of the frontier and can give your own orders, I only hope Sir Charles wont, in one of his wild moments, write an order to someone under your command to act in some quite contrary manner.

In justice to Sir Charles' memory not only men but even nature conspired to hinder his work. Public works were few. The Mole was perhaps the only memorial to the first Governor of Sindh. His other plans were mostly abortive. The elements also seem to be against him. Malarious fever or other sickness in 1843 prostrated two thirds the army and cholera in Karachi in 1846 killed 7000 people. Locusts destroyed a season's crops and floods destroyed another. In the winter of 1845-46 civil affairs were interrupted by the first Sikh war; and in the following year Sir Charles resigned imploring that Sindh must not have a civil administration. In 1853 the public raised to his memory an, obelisk that, in its utter meanness, seems to be an architectural application of the art of damning with faint praise. They also put up a memorial window in Trinity Church which was blown to pieces by the cyclone of 1902. It was said that even nature abhorred his memory.

Therefore, when Frere arrived, Sindh, as already described was minus any public works. Even the immigrants from Punjab, Kutch and Bombay were averse to work in Sindh. Partly heat and distance and besides it was uncivilized and showed no signs of improvement. Mr. Frere turned his attention at once to the Port of Karachi. Communications were extremely bad especially during the monsoon when post had to be carried to speak exactly through mud. To Frere to

develop the port of Karachi was, indeed, uphill work. Inertia ruled for two years. It was uphill work he wrote, officials poop-pooing and throwing cold water, merchants turning up their noses at commerce of which they have only a huckster's notion and dreadfully afraid, if they do believe there is any chance of any trade ever coming here, that the growth of a port 300 miles away and communicating with an entirely different region will ruin Bombay. At last, he wrote, to Lord Dalhousie, who, anxious to develop India was swift to act. A thorough survey of the harbour and coast began; but it was 1856 before the question of improvement of the port was taken in hand with rapid results.

Soon there was a scheme for a railway from Karachi to Kotri. Mr. Frere believed that Karachi and not Calcutta would be the harbour for Punjab. He was already encouraging steamer to touch Karachi from Bombay to Aden. In 1855 the Sindh Railway Company was formed in London and work was actually begun in May 1858 but the railway was delayed till 1861 by which time Mr. Frere had left Sindh. Sindh needed more bridges than roads for when the canals flooded the land all trade stopped. Major Jacob constructed solid bridges with circular arches. A road for carriages over the Laki hills was constructed. Travellers' bungalows followed. An annual fair at Karachi brought traders of Central Asia and Bombay together. First held in 1852 continued till the old method of trade disappeared.

Mr. Frere was the first to introduce postage stamp in India. It was said prior to their introduction that stamps would do well in Europe but not in India. Mr. Frere with the enterprising Mr. Coffey, the Postmaster of Karachi, designed a stamp bearing a broad arrow and the words *Scinde District Dawk* and distributed for sale. Orders were then given to every Police officer and district official to receive all letters bearing these tickets and forward them on till they were delivered to a regular post office. Thus every Government office in any department became a letter box and a cheap and efficient postal system was established all over the Province. This was the origin of the Sindh stamp in three colors the catalogue value when the Gazetteer was prepared, were 15, 25 and 60 shillings. These were abolished in 1854 when regular all India Stamps were introduced.

Education also received Mr. Frere's attention. He Wanted to make Sindhi the official language. Only two officers could speak the language but none could write. Up till then it was unwritten possessing practically no characters. Later Arabic alphabet was chosen and became the official language of correspondence and promotion in Civil service depended on its colloquial knowledge. Within five years of Frere's administration 25 officials could use it in their Courts. Schools were established in towns and the first English School in Karachi came in 1853.

Frere left due to ill health on furlough in 1856 and was succeeded by John Jacob who abolished forced labor on the canals by the Mirs so long continued. Frere returned in May 1857 and within two hours of his arrival was informed of the outbreak of the mutiny. He made all preparations to help up north especially Multan and Lawrence in Punjab. Frere had shouldered a fair amount of the burden to quell the Mutiny. Constant alarms and outbreaks in certain parts of Sindh found the echoes of the *Sepoy War*. But Frere saved every difficult situation. The situation could be met because no set of people showed any sympathy with the Mutineers. It was about this time, December 1858 that General John Jacob worn down by hard work and constant strain died.

The only incident of note about this time was the daring forgery of Ali Murad the Mir of Khairpur. Murad by daring forgery added more territory than his due to faked title deeds. This was discovered even before Napier left Sindh. The Mir was deprived of all these lands save his patrimony but by clever diplomacy Murad reestablished his reputation.

Frere left Sindh in May 1859 for a seat on the Governor General's Council. His successors silently continued his programme of progress and reforms. The normal development of all the departments of government continued. The commencement of the Mithrao canal, the advancement of education, extension of municipalities, a department for the Indus Reserve Conservancy, the Karachi Korti railway, the founding of the Karachi Chamber of Commerce. Then came the most important incidence the Sindh Courts Act whereby the higher judicial functions were separated from the Commissionership and committed to separate judicial Commissioner. Distinguished men like Sir William Merewether and Mr. W. H. Havelock came as Commissioner of Sindh. The latter is known for his part in the Abyssinian War and the distinction won in the Upper Sindh Frontier. The Governors continued to visit Sindh to keep a watchful eye on the progress of the Province. Sir R. Temple laid the foundation of the water works reservoir at Karachi in 1880; and we had the Empress Market, the clock, tower and the Dayaram Jethmal Sindh College. The Victoria Museum, the Lansdowne Bridge over the Indus at Sukkur are additional Land marks in the progress of improvements in Sindh. A series of Commissioners like Trevor, Murchison, Ollivant Wingate, Giles and others continued to give of their best in service to Sindh till the Sukkur Barrage in the twenties was to convert the desert into a meadow. One of the greatest engineering feats of the early decades of the present century. But more on these as the story unfolds. Here in India, as elsewhere the rule of law and order marked the beginning of new time.

The voice of law, order and justice was to echo beyond the banks of the Indus far into the wilderness called the desert. We have already referred to these regions, earlier that border on Kutch, Guzerat and Rajasthan. Though the population of



Sindh is mainly Muslim the Hindus are dominant in the desert. They were as previously mentioned, Rajputs mostly of the Soda clan, besides Rutton, Sumeera and Dessar.

The subjects of these Rajput chiefs were a pauper population of serfs who the British felt had their grievances and claims and rights too; this pauper population had been oppressed and it was known that their claims to relief, though not so loudly expressed, were perhaps even ten time better founded than those of the Chiefs, who clamored ever so loudly. The acme of oppression wrote Forbes, is to be oppressed beyond the heart to complain.<sup>19</sup>

The Mirs, as already mentioned, had a hard time in this wild and turbulent region. For some years after British occupation of Sindh they were ignorant of the geography of the desert region. Little notice appears to have been taken of these districts. No revenue officer seems to have visited the district Mirpur and forts of Omercote, Cheylar Chachra and Kodee were held by detachments and what little was learned was known to the authorities:<sup>20</sup>

The most intelligent people ... could only reckon up eight visits from European Civil Officers, of which only two or three from the Collector in eleven years. Few, if any, of the villages in the interior of the desert, I was assured had ever been visited till Lieutenant Tyrwhitt and Naylor went round them this year (*Ibid*)

It was not surprising that Native functionaries followed the same example, and that the *Kardars*, who had been four years in the district, knew little or nothing, from personal observation of these places.

In such a world of neglect the early years were of chaos. These regional were, as stated earlier, the home of the bandits and marauders. In 1846 the discontent became so general that several influential persons left their homes as outlaws. Not only were the cattle carried off by band of armed robbers but persons were kidnapped and held to ransom. One such outrage was perpetrated on the person of a Bania and his wife,<sup>21</sup> who were carried off from their house, within sight of a fort garrisoned by a Native detachment. The officer commanding declared to

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<sup>19</sup> Letter from Lieut. Forbes Deputy Collector of Mirpur, 13th September 1843

<sup>20</sup> Assessment Report on Omercote and Narra Districts 1853-54.

<sup>21</sup> “Under an understanding with the whole of the Sodas (Rajputs) .... oppress us quiet Banians. In the middle of the day, in public, we are robbed when transacting business. These persons say they will make no exceptions. We (Banians) look up to Government alone for protection. The justice of the Government is known in every country; therefore we pray something be done or with permission we the Banians ... will move from Omercote to some other place”. A petition from the Kara Banians of Omercote (dated 17th September 1846) to the Government about robberies by Rajputs in bright day light.

*Letter 17th September 1846.*

move out in pursuit. The man was ultimately induced to come in and was not only forgiven, but considerable concessions were made to him and his tribe, pensions to the amount of Rs 700 per annum was assigned to the Chief in the lieu of the marriage-fee. Varied demands were made all seeking to revive their old rights *viz.*, the revival of marriage tax of Rs 26½ formerly levied on the Bania population, rent free fields that some chiefs enjoyed, the Sodas took Rs 137 of customs to be levied on Rajputs bringing food, clothes etc., for, purposes of marriage, that the Sodas be exempted from duty on opium levied by the British Government, in times of scarcity, as formerly, the Sodas be permitted to import camel load of grain and in like manner varied extortions from the Bania population. The Government was willing to grant rent free field provided they were cultivated by the owners; Rs. 137 from Omercote customs was given as pension, to bring clothes, food etc, without duty was permitted. With the exception of these no privileges were sanctioned. The Chiefs were disappointed and lawlessness and disorder continued.

Forbes said: Our Government is not a Government for this class or for that class. We must show at starting that it will prove equally the father and protector of all; Koshias and Sodas must live in peace together; the serf and the slave must have their interests attended to as well as their lords and masters; if we find we have wolves to deal with as well as lambs, we must endeavor to change the nature of their appetite, not attempt to pacify them by letting them run not in the fold...

Meantime the inhabitants were subjected to various general measures, which, even when in themselves just and necessary, were not always very palatable. Among such measures may be mentioned the general abolition of all the emoluments in fields and the rent-free lands formerly enjoyed by Patells,, and a cess of considerable amount which the Sodas levied on the marriage of Hindus, and which was valued, not only as a source of income, but as one of the few relics of their ancient sovereign power. The Chiefs were also deprived of their arms though they belonged to the class which by the late Governor's proclamation, was allowed to carry arms as a mark of rank, and as a reward for prompt submission to British Government, and their treatment was in no respect better than that received by the ordinary zamindars elsewhere. Thus a gradual strangle-hold was being placed round the privileged classes.

Quiet was however, restored; a light rate of *battai* was introduced. In 1850 the districts were leased out; like the rest of the Collectorate, the lease holders being the principal Soda zamindars. The settlement was fixed on a light average of former years. Gradually there was little in the shape of complaint or otherwise heard of in the districts. The lease holders generally collected from their sub-tenants in kind; from others in cash, at the rate of Rs. 3 on a cultivated field and Rs. 1 from every field prepared for cultivation but not sown. But here as

elsewhere, the want of any useful record the gross amount collected whereby to guide future proceedings was severely felt. Nor was much information to be got from other sources. Mirpur itself was considered a remote and desert spot so that even Omercote 40 miles further and in the desert itself, was regarded almost a *terra incognita*.

In such a world, seldom visited, it was decided by Frere that besides protecting the ryot it was best to restore to the Chiefs and Patils their legitimate position and authority, the want of which was one capital defect of the system in force in Sindh. The solace of the Government lay everywhere in a return to vested interests, but controlled by Government.

Thar and Parkar were placed with Kutch under the control of the Political Agent and Commandant in Kutch. Colonel Roberts had long and intimate acquaintance with this part of the country. He was friendly with the Rao of Kutch, acquainted with the Chiefs and no more hand could be found than Colonel Roberts to settle the district of Thar and Parkar. All the districts *viz.*, Ballyaree, Deepla, Mittee, Islamkote, Singala, Veerawow Pittapur, Bakasir and Parkar, with the exception of Omerkote, Cheelar and Guddra which were left with Hyderabad were now joined with Kutch.

To police this new administrative unit there were five Jamedars and 110 horsemen. Most of these were Khosas the hereditary banditti of the desert, whose local knowledge and bravery; perhaps gave them importance and interest in their new duties. Captain Raikes, in his memoirs, gives the pains taken to make these Khosas into an efficient police force. The man who aided Colonel Roberts to achieve this purpose was a chief of the tribe Barra Khan who was persuaded to take service, with the British Government. The forts of the desert, Nowa Kote, Mittee and Islamkote (Singalla was in ruins) were garrisoned by Soda Chiefs as Killadars and 12 footmen each. The garrisoning of these forts by Sodas the British placed confidence in their loyalty and gave them employment and means of living; and, also raised them from the degraded position under the blighting influence of the Amirs. The Sodas were also given some lands for cultivation rent – free.

The grants of money and lands were confirmed to the different recipients by deeds of *sannads* in 1844, under the signature of the Governor of Sindh for a period of seven years. This limitation in time was placed with a view, to such modification, from time to time, as circumstances demanded. At the end of the seven years the Chiefs were informed by the Commissioner in Sindh that no immediate alternation was contemplated in their existing privileges and that a renewal, if any, lay in the future.

When transit duties were abolished, as already mentioned, the Chiefs who had shared therein were allotted corresponding portions in the frontier duties as compensation; and under the arrangement they continued to enjoy one half of the town and frontier duties of the eastern portion of the desert and Parkar, comprising their own districts and villages respectively, till 1848, when town duties were abolished, and the frontier levy assimilated to that in force in other parts of Sindh. An annual money allowance was then sanctioned as compensation for the loss of their share of the duties<sup>22</sup> to the zamindars.

Besides these transit and frontier duties there were the grazing fees which differed from the district to district. For example the shepherds at Virawow gave some *ghi*; others a bullock, cow or camel. This tax was therefore, levied in the most irregular manner. Though the right was recognized it was in no way defended and it appeared there was no need to interfere except afford redress against complaint. It was felt that with the spread of cultivation this tax would disappear. The British, therefore, interfered as little as possible in the collection of the tax. The tax was levied mainly from the wandering tribes. It was a perquisite and it did little harm. The Chief only looked to their immediate benefit and the British felt the removal of the tax would cause great uneasiness.

The administration was divided into Kardarates in Thar and Parkar 1st Kardarate was Dipla and Ballyari Districts; 2nd Mittur, Islamkote and Singala Districts and 3rd Virawow and Thar and Parkar Districts.

There was one Kardar and deputy Kardar in each Kardarate (*Taluka*). These officials transacted all the revenue and judicial business besides reporting and investigating all police cases. They also collected the revenue which was perhaps the only mode of collecting in the midst of a scattered population. Farming was not possible because of the want of knowledge of the region and the independence of the different class and tribes.

The judicial system in force in Sindh, generally, whereby the *Kardars* were vested with extensive powers was not applied uniformly to the desert region because the *Kardars* were very busy with their revenue duties. Litigation among the desert tribes was less common - most litigation was met by arbitration. Besides, most of this work was done by Panchayets and this mode of justice was most welcomed. Any other mode of justice would have been incomprehensible to the inhabitants of the desert. The *Kardars*, were later permitted, to collect a percentage on all civil suits and pay a rupee and a half to the assessors in civil cases. It was felt that to introduce more method and regularity the *Kardars* would have to give timely notice by issuing orders under their seal to parties concerned

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<sup>22</sup> Parkar, Virawow, Pittapur und Barasur

in pending cases. Thus the *Kardars* tried petty criminal cases assisted by assessors and pass sentences subject to the confirmation by magistrates. They also tried petty cases assisted by assessors and pass awards, subject, as in criminal cases to confirmation. Considering the backwardness of the Desert people this System was known to work well.

The police had no judicial powers they patrolled in the vicinity of their respective outposts, they executed all orders of the *Kardars* which were in writing numbered and entered in their diaries sent weekly to the magistrates.

The blessing of law, order and peace, in spite of the innumerable failings of Sir Charles Napier's administration, was brought to this land of the Indus. The arm of law had reached the utmost nooks and corners from Karachi to the Bolan Pass in far away Baluchistan. The peasant and the Chief realized a unifying factor in their political world in many centuries. The lamb and the lion could live side by side. It was, indeed, a difficult task. Language, custom people were all strange to this conqueror from over the sea, but here, as elsewhere, in this strange land, a bold effort was made to face the situation. Destiny alone could have beckoned them in our midst for a couple of centuries. And though the economic blessings were few, the experience was rich and there was much to learn for both the ruler and the ruled. The earliest lessons to be gleaned were from the land itself its richness and its poverty the story woven round the life of the ryot. It is to this story we now turn - the story of Sindh.

## TWO

## LAND

Geography must bless both the land and the people. Sindh Is the gift of The Indus<sup>23</sup> as Egypt is the gift of the Nile. A thirsty land blessed by the river made life possible. Sindh may be as old as Egypt and the Nile and Indus may have kissed these lands over the ages. The seasonal overflow of both the rivers quenched the thirst of these lands and gave life to a desert. Man made canals and built dams that stored the life giving waters that changed, in parts, the desert to a meadow. Agriculture was possible and rich crops sustained life. Both Sindh and Egypt are land of canals and possess dams which are the envy of many lands. Man and nature conspired to make a liveable world of what would have been an arid and inhabitable desert.

Cut off from the rest of the Bombay Presidency by the desert or by sea, Sindh differs widely from it in physical features and climate, as well as in language, dress and customs of the people.

The Province of Sindh is bounded on the west and north by great range of mountains - the Khirtar Range which stretches for hundreds of miles in series of ridges into Baluchistan. On the south it is bounded by the Arabian Sea from Karachi to the Rann of Cutch, about half of the sea coast being pierced by numerous active or dead mouths of the estuary of the River Indus. On the east it is bounded by and includes part of the great Indian desert a vast stretch of barren country covered at intervals with ridge after ridge of wind blown sand hills.<sup>24</sup> The tract of the country with these inhospitable neighbours has, however, one great friend and savior - the River Indus - which, as we know, traverses the whole Province from north to south.

Indeed, the Province owes its actual existence in its present form to this great river and its subsidiary overflow channels of which the principal are the Nara River and the Pinyari Fuleli, and Baghur *Dhands* all of which have now been canalized. By overflowing its banks for centuries, and spreading its eternal burden of silt over the surrounding country, the river has formed the

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<sup>23</sup> “The classic name of the river Indus was Sindhu, Sanskrit for an Ocean, and Sind was the country created and sustained by the river without which it would be a desert “.

Administrative Report, 1874-1875 P. 1-4.

<sup>24</sup> “Sind is bound on the north by Baluchistan the Panjab and the State of Bhawalpur: on the east by Rajputana; on the south by the Rann Cutch and the Arabian Sea and on the west by the territory of the jam of Las Bela and Khan of Kalat.” G. R. Amebkar, *The Crops of Sind Their Geography and Statistic*. 1928 p 1-4.

wonderfully fertile alluvial lands which comprise the useful portion of the Province and the whole of its cultivable area.

The Province is about 350 miles long from north to south, and varies in width from 250 to about 120 miles. Its total area is about 30,000,000 acres or 47,000 square miles; or slightly less than the area of England. Out of this area about half, or 23,500 square miles, is occupied by mountains, hills and broken rocky country, or by sandy desert; leaving 23,500 square miles of say 15,000,000 acres, of cultivable soil.<sup>25</sup> The Indian State of Khairpur encloses an area of 6,050 square miles and a population of 193,152.<sup>26</sup>

Sindh comprises three well – defined tracts

- 1) The Kohistan or hilly country, which lies as a solid block between Karachi and Sehwan and is thence continued north, as narrow fringe along the skirts of the Kirthar range.
- 2) Sindh proper, the central alluvial plain, watered by the Indus; and
- 3) The Registan or Thar a band of so called desert, on the eastern border, when rolling sand hills alternating with valleys, are often fairly wooded and there are extensive level tracts of pasture land.

The alluvial tract of Sindh has formed channels for the Indus or its branches. The main central stream of North Western India flowing 1800 miles cuts across Sindh nearly 580 miles; and when the snow melts in spring the waters overflow and flood the low – lying country far and wide. The Indus collects the waters of the five rivers and forms at its mouth deltaic matter and flows to the sea, through shifting channels, on the southern borders of Sindh.

The Indus changes its course rapidly. This is due to the soft soil of the entire valley where erosion is rapid. Hence the water is heavy with silt and this falls with the velocity of water and forms fresh banks and shoals. There is a constant accumulation of silt along the bed of the channel rising the level above that of the surrounding country and hence affording an easy means of irrigation on which the agricultural prosperity of Sindh depends by channels drawn from the Central river. The Indus during the inundation is several miles in breadth. But this

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<sup>25</sup> “Territory of His Highness the Mir of Khairpoor which penetrates the Sind boundaries on the east, ha an area of about 6,000 square miles and a population of about 200,000. Only about 1,250 square miles, or 800,000 acres, of the state are cultivable, the remaining area consisting of ranges of limestone hills, or desert sand hills.” *Future of Sind*, 1923 p. 1-3.

<sup>26</sup> The Crops of Sind 1928 G. R. Ambekar Bulletin No. 150 of 1927.

volume varies with the seasons Where the river has fully risen the measured discharge at Sukkur is the colossal figure of a million cubic feet per second. At other seasons it falls below twenty thousand cubic feet per second.

The Indus means so much to the Province that a good season depends entirely on the Indus river. The agricultural fortunes of Sindh have depended on the steady rise and fall in the level of the river. But unfortunately this even standard of rise and fall varies and the country has often suffered such vagaries as a later rise, an intermediate drop of a premature fall.

Besides Indus there are important hills and streams or *nais* like Hab, which is almost a river, and though at times a string of unconnected pools in the dry season, it forms a boundary between Sindh and Baluchistan. The Malir supplies drinking water to Karachi and the Baran supplies Kohistan and the Gaj.

Lakes are rare the largest is Manchar in Larkana district. In the inundation season it measures 20 miles in length and covers 180 square miles. In the off season the flood hollows for pretty lakelets (*dhands*.) The Makhi *dhand* 50 miles in circumference in Thar and Parkar is the haunt of Hur outlaws.

The province is flat the only elevation are the Kirthar range which separate Sindh from Baluchistan, they attain the height of 7000 feet above the sea level. The only other mountains; are in wild and rocky tract of Khoistan of Karachi District. They are unimportant in the economy of Sindh. The plain country is a mixture of dry desert and alluvial plain. The most productive region lies in the neighbourhood of Shikarpur and Larkana perhaps the most productive in Sindh. Another tract of alluvial soil stretches eastward from the Indus to the Eastern Nara. Besides there are large tracts rendered sterile for want of irrigation. Sindh, we know, lives on the alluvial brought down by the Indus mixed with sand dunes and is the extension of Rajputana desert. From this it can be inferred that the soil is fine alluvial silt, over a very large part of the Province. This is actually the case. But the effects of the soil on different crops differ very widely according to its composition of sand and clay. Western Sindh, South of Sehwan, is mostly a hilly region.

The lands in and around the delta of the Indus deserve some general remarks. The country on the sea coast is submerged at high tide for a distance of three or four miles, and continues swampy about two miles further inland. These marshy tracts which in most places are destitute of bushes, afford excellent pasturage for large herd of buffaloes, and on the account considered by the peasantry as valuable property. Notwithstanding their dreariness, they often present a greater appearance of animation than was observed in more populous parts of the country; for every creek was full of boats, and men were seen in every direction,



cutting grass for the cattle of their distant villages. This grass was of a coarse thorny kind being impregnated with salt, it was preferred by the cattle, and natives said they thrive on it much better.

The districts, immediately above these swampy plains, are the most productive in the delta and are easily brought under cultivation. These districts terminate about twelve miles from the sea, and the dense mass of jungle with which the whole of Upper Sindh is overrun commences. The soil is generally composed of clay, mixed more or less with sand, and contained large quantity of salt, which appeared in thin crust of the surface. The soil of lower Sindh was not in fact so rich as represented. Much of the land in this region lay waste and neglected. But with a little labour could be rendered cultivable. Two consecutive crops exhaust the soil, unless manured. But as we proceed inland the soil improved and became richer by the silt brought down by the Indus, the cause of all its fertility.<sup>27</sup>

We may now turn to the geography of the desert region. The Omercote desert is bounded to the west by the level plain of the Narra and the Mirpur and Jooda districts; to the north by a strip of desert; to the east by Jodhpur and to the south by Thar. It is composed of sand hills and sandy undulating ground occasionally interspersed with patches of level ground very rarely exceeding half a mile in diameter. On its western border it rises like land from sea, to a general height of from 50 to 100 feet above the dead level of the plain of Sindh and some of the highest sand hills may be a hundred feet more.<sup>28</sup> They are not so high nor so regular, nor so well clothed with grass and brushwood as the sand-hills of the Thar to the south, nor so loose and bare as those of the desert further north, the difference being partly due to original formation and partly to the comparative scarcity of rain as you go north from the border of the Rann of Kutch.<sup>29</sup> Except on the border towards Sindh the water is everywhere deep and generally brackish.

Of Narra almost less was known than of Omercote. It consisted of two divisions, the Registan or desert, and the Narra Put of alluvial plain. The former was a portion of the desert bounded on the west by the channel of the Narra which separated it from the level plain of Sindh. The inhabitants of this portion apparently differed little from those of Omercote desert, but I could not learn

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<sup>27</sup> "In some respects the annual swelling of the Indus is attended with peculiar phenomena: one year the country on its right bank is so delayed that towns and villages, though protected by strong dams, are threatened with inundation, while on the opposite side of the river there may be found, during the same season, a difficulty of irrigation. In distributing its favors, the stream exhibits more of constancy than caprice; for when once it has taken to either of the banks it adheres for a series of years to the favored side", Geography Memoirs of the River Indus. 1836.

<sup>28</sup> Assessment of Omercote and Narra Districts 1853-54, p. 2.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

that an European officer, or even any intelligent Native had ever visited them, wrote Mr. Frere. The Put was a portion of the level alluvial plain of Sindh, of an irregular triangular shape, one extremity of the base being towards Omercote, and the other towards Mirpur and the apex near Mitrow. The alluvial plain from near Mitrow appeared to the eye a dead level, but the portions nearest sandhills of the eastern desert were rather lower than the rest of the plain so that the flood waters naturally flowed along the base of the eastern sandhills. Among these sandhills were depressions, often several miles in diameter, and sinking nearly as much below the general level of the alluvial plain as the sandhill rose above it.

Consequently, when the flood emerged as it came, to the depressions (*Dhands*) it poured into the *Dhand* till the sand was thoroughly saturated before it continued to skirt the desert. Chains of these *Dhands* often communicated with each other and their extent could be judged from the fact that some of them absorbed the whole flood for a period of 15 days, before the *Dhand* became sufficiently fall to allow the flood to continue its passage. When the waters over flowed the plain to the westward, it soon dried up, after the river subsided, and the flooded portion became fit for *rabi* (cold weather crop) cultivation. Even the beds of the *Dhand* became fit for the cultivation as they dried up; but some of them were so deep that they retained water for long intervals between any two floods.

When, however, the plain was flooded every one turned to cultivation and strangers, whose homes were in the Desert or in Hyderabad district, nearer the river, flocked to the spot with their plough and cattle. Bantias, with donkey loads of seed grain, were in attendance also. As fast as the water dried up, the land was ploughed and sown. The field distinguished by boundaries hardly recognised by any but the owners were left with few watchmen, that they appeared to be deserted; while the cultivators returned home when the sowing was at an end. As the grain ripened the cultivators reassembled to reap and took part in its division by *battai*, after which the plain again deserted till the next flood came again.

The Thar or the Little Desert was a strip as it were, running along the northern border of the great Rann of Kutch, its length was about 120 and, breadth 40 to 50 miles while its area was about 5,400 square miles.<sup>30</sup> It was bounded on the west by the valley of the Indus, on the north an irregular line running east to the Marwar boundary, dividing Omercote district itself, as we know a portion of the desert. To the East the Rann separated it from the Pahlapur district of Guzerat. To the south lay the Rann of Kutch itself.

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<sup>30</sup> S. N. Raikes, *Memoirs of Thar and Parkar*, (1856). p. 2.

The Thar consisted of a tract of sandhills resembling the waves of a troubled sea, running East and West. Along the edge of the Rann, water was generally found at one or two fathoms from the surface; in some parts brackish, in most drinkable. Wells were dug at the bottom of which was placed a wooden foundation; the water thus filtering through the sand was sweet so long as the wells were worked. The hills were composed of fine sand; they owe their shape to earthquakes than to the winds.<sup>31</sup>

The district of Parkar is situated south east of the Thar; it differed from Thar in every particular. In Parkar hills were composed of hard rock. It was plain intersected by ranges of low hills with a large mass of similarly formed high ones, 20 miles in circumference, in the centre of the district, the, highest being 350 feet above the surrounding level. There were no rivers or perennial streams in Thar or Parkar. There were remains of many old tanks in Parkar and clearly showed that this district was in bygone ages in a more civilized and populous state than it had been during the last two or three centuries.

Owing to its prevalent aridity, and the absence of the monsoon the climate of Sindh ranks among the hottest<sup>32</sup> and most variable in India. The average temperature of the summer is 95 degrees and that of winter 60 degrees. But the thermometer frequently rose in summer to 114 degrees and occasionally to 120 degrees while in winter it fell as low as freezing point. No other part of India has as long a continuance of excessively hot weather, owing to the deficiency, of rain.

Hot scorching winds prevailed in the hot weather months. These were very strong in the south of Sindh, where they caused volumes of dust to pour through the atmosphere. In the north of Sindh these winds did not prevail, but on the contrary the atmosphere was intensely still and dose but whenever the wind did spring up, the air felt like a hot blast from a furnace. Owing to these winds, shelter particularly, to garden areas and public roads had to be provided. The need of road side trees could not be overstated. Without these it would be difficult to walk without protection to the feet.

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid. p.2.

<sup>32</sup> But the heat in the desert is dreadful if the following description by Mr. Horace Bell is just: "A strong wind from the south West and west-south-west blows over the Sindh desert and runs over Rajputana in the months of March, April, May and June. At the end of April or in May when the wind is most violent or in what the natives call the *chaliha* or forty days the wind has at times a probable velocity of 40 miles an hour and it is apparently hardly less violent at night. The whole atmosphere is charged with dust and fine sand the crest of the ridges are all in motion and scraps of drift sand form on their north-east, ends. The people who live in this desert describe this time of the year as almost intolerable; and indeed with fearful heat day and night the sand in their mouths, eyes and food and clothing the want of water and the almost sleepless nights. It must near a realization of the internal regions is they can expect is to find in the world." J. W. Smyth, Gazetteer of the Sindh Province 'B' Volume 1920. p. .4

The climate on the sea coast was equable than in Upper Sindh. The air was moist and it resembled Bombay. The thermometer at Shikarpur often sank below freezing point in winter; yet in summer, for weeks together the readings at midnight did not fall below 100 degrees. Jacobabad boasted of the highest temperature<sup>33</sup> recorded in India (127 degrees in June) and yet it was also the coldest station in the Bombay Presidency.

The climate of the delta in winter was fairly good being cool, dry, and bracing; the temperature ranged from 45 degree to 76 degrees, and during the day was most agreeable. Fog some times occurred summers were hot, and during the inundation the climate unhealthy. The well-to-do went to Hyderabad till the inundation waters receded. Fever, dysentery and ague prevailed during the floods and the People of the delta looked prematurely old.

The climate of the desert and Parkar was not very dissimilar from that of Kutch but being north of it, experienced the south-west monsoon with less violence, while the extremes of hot and cold were greater there than in Kutch, particularly in the desert, where in the hot weather, the glare and the reflected heat was over-powering. The villages or hamlets were generally built on the top of hills, and these were cooler in the hot season and less cold in winter. Fever and rheumatism were the prevalent diseases, while smallpox took the toll from the children. Exposure and absence of proper houses was conducive to sickness and premature old age in extremes of climate. Most of the houses were constructed of sticks and brushwood thatched with grass; few houses built of bricks or stone and mud with tiled roofs could be seen.

Variations in climatic conditions were best illustrated by comparison of winter and summer temperature in Jacobabad and Karachi. While intensive heat and severe cold are experienced during the same period at Jacobabad, Karachi is aloof from such extremes. This is what is meant by more equable climate of Karachi.<sup>34</sup> This is about the variation in temperature. Owing to the sea the climate of Karachi is more humid than Jacobabad where it is quite dry. But Karachi and Jacobabad are perhaps two extremes. Considerable varieties of climate were

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<sup>33</sup> Jacobabad is the hottest place in India. In 20 years it was only thrice that the temperature did not reach 120 degrees in the shade. The maximum was 126 degrees; it was 15th May 1912 and in the same year 120 degrees in the shade continued unbroken for 18 days. The heat is at its highest in the second half of May and yet the difference may be 50 degrees between the maximum and minimum. The temperature falls from the 2nd week in October and fine bracing weather is experienced till March. Frost is not unknown. In April and May dust storms are prevalent. In eastern part of the district the heat is not so fierce due to the river. Gazetteer p. 2& 3.

<sup>34</sup> The climate of Karachi is the best in Sindh and one of the best anywhere in the plains of India, since the fierce heat of Summer is tempered by a breeze from the sea which however is not so moisture-laden and depressing as on the Bombay coast. Humidity is very variable during the cold season but the air is never dry with the dryness of Northern India. Gazetteer p. 5.

found to be within these two extremes. The climate of Sindh is perhaps the most variable in India and our description will not cover the climate of Sindh. Even in the same district climate differed. The climate in the Karachi district near the coast and in hilly Kohistan was very different than the climate in the barren Lakhi range of hills. Similarly in Thar and Parkar the climate in the irrigated west was very different than in the desert in the east. In Nawabshah there was a vast difference between the south and north of the district. Wide differences are therefore found in almost every district of Sindh. A clear picture was only possible with a study of every district separately.

Though it is on the edge of two monsoons Sindh is unrefreshed by either. The south–west monsoon stops at Lakhput in Kutch in southeast. The north–east monsoon passes no further than Karachi on the extreme south-west. The rainfall of Sindh is thus, scanty and irregular and its average only about eight inches. The record of series of almost rainless seasons was occasionally broken by a sudden excessive rainfall of such deluges, one of the most notable occurred in Karachi when over seven inches of rain fell in 24 hours. A similar heavy fall occurred in Karachi in 1926, while south-east Sindh suffered very seriously from floods which destroyed thousands of acres of crop as the result of a storm in 1927.

Over a greater part of Sindh, in fact, rain is a nuisance rather than a benefit. Cultivation does not depend upon it but upon the Indus. And excess of rain means that the houses (which are usually made of mud) fall and the country becomes unhealthy. This being the case rain was not usually welcomed and, in this respect, the greater part of Sindh differs from most of India. The fall varies from place to place it is lowest in the region, being along the right bank of the Indus and highest on the coast but the difference was small.

There are two tracts one largely hilly in Kohistan (in Karachi) and south Larkana where irrigation was impossible and which depended on the uncertain. The other was south east of Sindh, the Thar desert. These areas were inhabited by semi-nomadic cattle and camel breeders. To them crops was a subsidiary industry. Their wealth was cattle. The rain was here needed for pasture and not crops and a failure of rain was disastrous and led to loss of cattle.

In the Karachi district rainfall was very precarious. The average was about seven inches. The average for, the typical stations was:

**Karachi** 7.62 inches Kotre 6.63; Shahbunder 9.96 and Manghud 3.88

**In Hyderabad:**

Hyderabad 7.25 inches: Badin 9.35 and Hala 6.91

**In Parkar:**

Mirpukhas 4.76 inches, Umerkot 7.95, Nagar Parker 14.57, Diplo 8.99 and Sanghar 4.17.

**In Nawabshah:**

Nawabshah 6.42 inches; Moro 7.22 and Kandiaro 4.52

**In Larkana:**

Larkana 4.44 inches: Mehar 3.07 and Ubauro 5.31

**Upper Sindh Frontier:**

Jacobabad 4.00 inches: Kashmore 4.93 and Shahdadkot 6.02.

The rainfall was recorded in various years and was typical on the districts.

With the exception of Thar and Parkar, districts, where the rain varied from 10 to 15 inches, and produced *bajri*, the, main staple food of the area, the rainfall ranged from 5 to 8 inches throughout the rest of the Province.

Hence the Province depended not on rainfall but artificial irrigation. Life in Sindh, as in Egypt, depended on the bounty of the river. The rise and fall of the Indus made the year of happiness or sorrow. Hence a system of canals and their network over the land made life possible. The main stay of Sindh's agricultural economy was irrigation.

**A few words on the animals.** Fowl and fish in Sindh would not be out of place. Amongst the animals of Sindh, the camel, both from its size and utility ranks first in importance. Very few were seen near the sea coast, but in upper parts droves of forty or fifty were frequently passed. They were rather small and light in limb than those of Arabia and from being better fed, were much finer looking animals. The horned cattle did not differ from those of India Horses of a diminutive breed were met with at every village in great numbers a few were sent annually, to Bombay. In the thick jungles, wild hogs abounded, and there was also an animal very common in the interior, which, from the description must be the elk. Deer were also frequently met with. The country was infested with jackals, who prowled about day and night and were very ravenous, they had been known on several occasions to attack men. A lynx and a leopard were seen, and tigers on few occasions, but none of these animals were numerous. Horses were abundant everywhere. The dogs were large, and so ferocious that it was dangerous for strangers to approach them, without being accompanied by some of the inhabitants.

There were vast number of water fowls near the swamps and the sea coast, the latter were literally covered and it was almost impossible to convey an idea of the large numbers of these fowls. The varieties of the wild duck were innumerable, and geese, pelican, flamingoes, spoonbills, storks, cranes, royal and grey curlews, herons, snipes, with several other kinds, were seen in immense numbers. The Egyptian ibis was common. There was also a large bird, about the size of a turkey, called the *kullum* which only made its appearance in the winter months and was found in wet and dry situations. They were witnessed all over the fields. In the thick jungles partridges, quails and plovers were equally numerous. Among the small birds were some with very rich plumage and colours. The domestic fowl were remarkably fine and healthy. This landscape here, as elsewhere, would undergo a change over the years and some of the specie, animal or fowl, would either completely disappear or perceptibly lessen in numbers.

The fish obtained in the greatest quantity was the delicious *pulla*: it was of a most delicate flavor, but so rich, from the quantity of oil it contained, that quite a few people could not eat it. The mullet was also abundant, and of a large size. Besides these, there were several other kinds that were common to most of the Indian rivers. Oysters and turtles abounded everywhere; tortoises were seen as far as Thatta. There were also a great number of water snakes of a large size

Sindh has been irrigated by means of artificial canals from time immemorial. As back as the eight century we find the Arab conquerors, in assessing their land tax, had to differentiate between the lands watered from the public canals and lands watered, privately by, artificial means. To, come to more recent times, Sir A. Burnes, going up Western Narra in 1830 writes:

*Its water are courted and distributed by canals which add to the blessings bestowed by nature on this flat and fertile land. The eastern bank, though less favored than the opposite one, is highly cultivated, and most of the towns and villages, stand on the verge of the canals, which bountifully distribute waters of the periodical swell and attest the industry and assiduity of the inhabitants.*

The Mirs levied an additional tax on lands watered from the state canals but discharged very imperfectly their duty of repairing and cleaning the same so that in 1841 Lieutenant Postans wrote: *In repeated instances large tracts of fertile lands have become wastes entirely owing to the neglected state of the canals.* But the zamindars were more enlightened and knowing the increased value of their lands from increased means of irrigation, they extended largely to procure them, and employed labour to keep their canals constantly clear from the deposited slime of the inundation.

After the conquest of, Sindh by the British in 1842 they formed a Canal and Forest Department in 1843. Sir Charles appointed Lt. Col. Walter Scott, but his assistants were not engineers. Scott submitted a report in 1846-47 on survey operations in Sindh, method of maintaining irrigation in the existing canals and description of the methods of cultivation and irrigation hitherto adopted. He said most rivers were regulated by building dams to control the level of water. Such dams were to be built in rocky sites available in Sindh and pointed out the Sukkur – Rohri Gorges as the best sites. His proposals for the moment were silt clearance in the best canals and close the redundant. Nothing was done and the Department was closed in 1849. The rest of the story was one of continued proposals with hardly any achievements.<sup>35</sup>

Two or three years later efforts were again made to infuse life into schemes and proposals. Mr. Frere's attention was directed to the subject immediately after his appointment in 1851 by John Jacob, and he got sanction to organise a new department under Colonel Blois Turner, R.E. In the meantime John Jacob obtained permission to deepen and widen the Begari canal at a cost of Rs 1,30 000 and the resulting increase of revenue was estimated, at more than a lakh per annum. Another scheme of Jacob's, the Desert canal was forwarded to Government in 1865 but not carried out till long after. In 1859 a channel connecting the Eastern Nara with the Indus at Rohri and converting, the former into a perennial canal was opened with great éclat. This work was planned and carried out by Lieutenant J. G. Fife, R.E; who had already in 1855, submitted a very able report on the remodeling of the whole canal System of the Province.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Fife submitted a scheme worth 26 lakhs of rupees for the Rohri Hyderabad area..... This estimate was returned for a revised project. Fife submitted it as revised in 1859. The Bombay Governance accepted it but said no funds were available. From 1859 to 1867 the matter was held in abeyance. Next year a scheme was submitted by Le Mesurier. This was returned for revision. Again in 1869 a revised project for a large Rohri Canal was prepared but the Commissioner of Sindh gave it a very limited support.

In 1872 the Governor ordered the abandonment of the Rohri project in favour of the Jamrao canal. In 1880 the Secretary of State drew attention to the very forcible need for improvement of irrigation in Sindh. In 1881 the Bombay Government, in spite of the suggestion of the Government of India, that although feasible, they were not in favour of perennial canal in Sindh. They recommended a small Rohri canal. In 1882 the Government of India accepted the proposal.

The matter was dropped until 1890 and Fife's proposals were again being looked into. In 1892 a committee was appointed under the Commissioner in Sindh and they reported unanimously that the Rohri canal was not needed. They only recommended the improvement of the existing canals. As a result large sums were spent on improving the existing canals.

*Musto, The Sukkur Barrage Scheme, 1923. p. 17.*

<sup>36</sup> Lieut. Fife laid down certain sound principles which he considered ought to guide all future operations. These might be stated briefly: 1) Though the old canals should be cleaned & deepened at their mouth, no new canal should be made on the old pattern; 2) that the head of the canal ought to be situated at a place where the river bank is permanent; 3) that the stream of canal must have sufficient velocity to sweep along the silt thrown in by the river; 4) that to this end there must be room to carry a canal along for a sufficient distance at a slope a little less than the slope of the country until, it feeds the land at the proper level, which



Besides the Begari the Ghar canal, owing to its efficiency, made a portion of the Larkana District the Garden of Sindh was also one of the first to receive attention. The Fuleli canal, one of the biggest in Sindh was also much improved during this period, 1859. Since the Nara Supply channel was opened (1859) the Sukkur canal was constructed between 1865 and 1870, the Jamrao canal was constructed in 1894 and completed in 1901 and numerous other canals were under construction. In fact, the problem which first received serious attention in Sir B. Frere's time was nearly lost sight of for the next 75 years. Delay came to the helm of affairs and a variety of suggestions were accepted and rejected over a length of time.

The table shows the various existing canals in Sindh, the period when they were constructed and the expenses involved in their construction which will give an idea of the progress made and the magnitude of the work done:

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would probably not be less than 30 miles and, 5) that the larger a canal the less slope is required to give it the requisite velocity.

In accordance with these principles he sketched out four lines of canals.

*Gazetteer p. 262.*

<b>PROGRESS OF IRRIGATION IN SINDH</b>				
No of Work	Name of Irrigated Work	Estimated cost (in Rs.) of Construction and indirect	Date of Completion	Date when the system first cane into operation
(1)	(5)	(2)	(3)	(4)
<b>Productive</b>				
1	Eastern Nara Canal	86,16,551	1897-98	1854-55,
2	Begari Canal	24,77,798	1890-91	1855-56
3	Ghar Canal	6,78,303	1887-89	1856-7
4	Fuleli Canal	32,01,582	1892-93	1861-62
5	Sukkur Canal	14,85,574	1885-88	1870-71
6	Desert Canal	2,749,968	1891-92	1872-73
7	Alibhar Canal	1,07,169	1875-76	1873-74
8	Marak Canal	4,58,028	1881-82	1873-74
9	Sarfraz Wah	1,21,680	1875-76	1873-74
10	Unhar Wah	7,95,700	1890-91	188-86-
11	Jamrao Canal	99,54,821	1901-02	1900-01
12	Hasanah Wah	3,04,579	1906-07	1903-04
13	Navlaki	1,35,678	Not completed	1928
14	Kalri	96,333	1921-22	1922-23
15	Pinigari Canal	11,78,885	1921-22	1922-23
16	IndusRight Bank Canal	88,760	1921-22	1922-23
17	Indus Left Bank Canal	2,58,938	1921-22	1922-23
18	Sindh Canal & Branches	8,34,656	1921-22	1923-24
19	Ranjiho Chith & Garang	2,86,928	1921-22	1923-24
20	Canabin Rohri	1,97,088	1921-22	1923-24
21	Western Nara & Pritchard	20,82 928	1921-22	1923-24
22	Phitta	26,136	1921-22	1923-24
23	Marviwah	9,737	1921-22	1923-24
24	Gharo Mahomudo	1,09,785	1921-22	1923-24
25	Nasirwah	47,157	1921-22	1923-24
26	Indus Canals (other Canals, Fuleli Division)	115,783	1921-22	1923-24
27	Kari Sumali	15,793	1921-22	1923-24
28	Dambhro	51,818	1921-22	1923-24
<b>Total Production Rs. 3,64,94,392</b>				

Perhaps the best way of visualizing the growth of irrigation is by reference to the increase in cultivation brought about by the extension of the canals. The following figures show the total cropped area and the total area irrigated at the end of each ten years since 1885-86, the year for which we have, for the first time, such statistic available.

EXTENT OF CANAL IRRIGATION IN SINDH			
<i>(Area in thousands of acres)</i>			
Year	Net cropped area	Area Irrigated by Canals	Percentages of canal irrigated area to net cropped area
1885-86	1,470	1,238	84.20%
1895-96	2,655	2,009	75.70%
1904-05	3,357	2,802	83.30%
1915-16	3,254	2,935	90.20%
1925-26	3,946	2,840	72.00%

The area no doubt varies according to seasonal conditions but still the above certainly gives a definite indication of progress. From the figures it is clear that both the net cropped area and the area irrigated from canals in the Province was in 1925-26 much greater than it was forty years ago.<sup>37</sup>

The irrigation carried by the means of canals may be classed under three heads. First there was land which was above the level of the surface of water in full canals and on to which; consequently, the water would not run without the aid of machinery. The water had to be lifted on to the land with the aid of machinery. Second, there was land which was watered with the aid of machinery, while the supply, in canal was low but on to which the water would run without a lift when the canal was full. Third, there was land which was so low that after the canal was about three parts full the water would run off without a lift; no machinery being needed. The water was to be directed from the canal to the field.

With cultivation exposed to so many risks, arising from the capricious nature of the water supply, it could not be a matter of wonder that the people should look on cultivation as a species of lottery. They were successful one season and bankrupt the next. No one who sowed could say he would reap.

**Canals are of two types.** Canals which rely solely upon the natural flow of the rivers for the supplies may be divided into two main types; (a) perennial canals, and (b) inundation canals.

<sup>37</sup> Source: *Annual Revenue Report for 1881-82*, Irrigation Department.

Acres of Cultivation			Irrigation share of net consolidated assessment	Remarks	
Kharif	Rabi	Total			
1876-77	1,291,273	418,948	1,710,221	24,02,259	Flood
1877-78	1,093,900	202,165	1,296,065	26,68,996	Flood
1878-79	1,333,546	551,769	1,885,315	29,57,160	
1879-80	1,114,510	228,241	1,342,753	27,72,085	
1880-81	1,172,384	156,278	1,328,662	28,43,067	
Average	1,261,122	311,481	1,512,603	27,27,713	

Perennial canals have an obstruction across the bed of the parent stream by means of which they are enabled to obtain their supplies irrespective of the level of the water in the river. The water by the means of obstruction was gathered up to the height required in the canal and seasonal fluctuations in the water level in the river were thus counteracted. The obstruction was a weir or barrage, fitted with shutters or sluices.

Inundation canals are those with no weirs so that the water fluctuates with the natural water level in the river. When this rises the level in the canal rises; when it falls the level in the canal falls with it. Hence the inundation canal obtains a supply only when the parent stream was in flood, hence the area irrigated is solely dependent upon seasonal conditions. There may be an ample, volume in the river but, in absence of any method of raising its level, it could not be forced into the canal until the water rises, of its own accord to a sufficient level.

Now, Sindh depends for its irrigation upon inundation canals the supply of which fluctuates daily, with the rise and fall of the water level in the river, there being no means in most places, of regulating this level artificially, as is done in the case of the most of the other great canals of India. When the Indus was in flood the inundation canals obtained a fall supply; but when the level fell in winter only those placed fortunately receive a supply and most of the water runs waste to the sea. Most of these canals flowed by June and ceased by October, and even then the water fluctuated during the monsoon. Rohri was perhaps the only place which received water for the whole year because of special arrangement. Jamrao was the best known. Even this supply was not assured and the canals did suffer more or less deficiency each year.

Over and above the irregular supply of water in the canals, the striking features of the canal system were the irregular directions and innumerable bends of the canals. In the north and centre of Sindh, huge spoil banks mark the whereabouts of the canals. These were the consequence of the clearance work. The water carried large quantity of silt; if this was not cleared the water would cease to flow. In spite of these defects, however, irrigation by canals was the chief main stay of agriculture in Sindh. Normally from about 75 to 80 percent of the net cropped area in the Province was served with irrigation (almost the whole of which was from Government canals). In fact, except two areas (Kohistan and Karachi and south Larkana District) which were dependent for their cultivation on the very uncertain rains, almost the whole Province was dependent on irrigation for the raising of crops.

The following table shows the proportion of irrigated area to cropped area in different districts, for any normal year.

EXTENT OF IRRIGATION			
District	Net cropped area	Irrigated area	Percentage of irrigated to cropped area
<b>Area in thousands</b>			
Karachi	408	334	81.90%
Hyderabad	663	663	100.00%
Thar Parkar	964	391	40.60%
Nawabshah	532	484	90.90%
Larkana	808	586	72.50%
Sukkur	514	296	57.60%
Upper Sind	536	533	99.40%
<b>Total</b>	<b>4425</b>	<b>3287</b>	<b>74.30%</b>

All Government canals were in charge of Canal Officers<sup>38</sup> appointed in 1879. These were for administrative purposes. They, were charged not only with the issue of Water but the supervision over its rise, to prevent waste, provide for drainage and secure the best results from the supply available. As the authority to grant land on any canal lay with the Land Revenue Department the officers of the two Departments were to cooperate and work, under the Commissioner from time to time.

For the purposes of irrigation administration, the canals in Sindh were divided into two Divisions (a) the Indus Right Bank Division, and (b) the Indus Left Bank

<sup>38</sup> The "Circle Officer will be the immediate superior of the *Abdars* in his circle and will supervise their work in all its branches and their general conduct.

The following is a list of the various kinds of duties

1. To check the weekly returns of cultivation submitted by the *Abdars*;
2. To supervise the maintenance of the water – courses;
3. To supervise the distribution of water;
4. To prevent waste of water and report cases of waste of water;
5. To prevent water being used unauthorized and to report cases in which it is done;
6. To generally watch the irrigation in his circle, and report where water is running to waste or where more is required.

Each *Abdar* must inspect every village in his charge once every week and write the result of his inspection. It will be the duty of each Canal officer to test at least 10 percent of these returns each week.

The water courses are to be kept in proper repair by the zamindar irrigating from them. They must remove silt, weeds and all obstructions, so that water may flow freely in them and keep the bunds in good repair.....”

*Executive Engineer’s Circular for Canal officers regarding duties, distribution of water etc No. 741 of 1907.*

Division, in or about 1928 a third Division the Sukkur Barrage Division had been formed. These Divisions comprised 5 or 6 Canal Districts or Circles, each Canal District included a number of canals some of which ran in more than one district. The Irrigation Districts were thus not conterminous with the Revenue Districts.

In Sindh, all the canals except four *viz.*, the Jamrao, Mithrao Fuleli and Sukkur canals were purely inundation canals i.e., they flowed only during such periods as the river was high and for the remainder of the year were dry and useless. On an average the period of flow could, be taken as from June to September i.e., four months working season. For the rest of the year no cultivation was possible on the area served by these canals, except by means of wells or crops grown without watering and dependent on the land having been flooded deeply before cultivation. Such crops were comparatively small in area. Hence the cultivator was dependent for his crops during a four months' season and for the rest of the year was comparatively idle. This was the primary difficulty in maintaining a large area under cultivation. In some districts there was, besides, a serious famine of even drinking water during the dry season. To remedy this serious defect and to give the Province, the benefit of an assured 'perennial' supply the construction of the Sukkur Barrage had to be undertaken.

The Barrage was to be constructed across the Indus below Sukkur where the river passed through a deep gorge. The site chosen was some 3 miles downstream of the gorge and from this point seven canals, four on the left bank and three on the right, would run southward, taking up the irrigation effected from the existing inundation canals and extending facilities for cultivation to an enormous area, at the moment waste. It would command an area of 7½ million acres, of which, 6½ million acres was cultivable. An annual area of irrigation of 5½ million acres was anticipated of which 2 million acres, represented existing inundation irrigation which would be given an assured supply by the new canals.

In July 1910, the Chief Engineer for Irrigation submitted to the Government of Bombay the combined project, for the Barrage, the Eastern Nara system and the Right Bank Canal system. He recommended for sanction, only, the estimates for

The Barrage	Rs. 2 19,34,767
Rohri Canal	Rs. 4,49,75,788
Eastern Nara	Rs. 1,16,64,436 <sup>39</sup> .

He stated that the project prepared for the Right Bank Canal was not suitable and hence he did not recommend it. He suggested that the project be revised. He

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<sup>39</sup> A. A. Musto. *The Future of Sind; The Sukkur Barrage Scheme*. 1923 p. 20.

emphasised the absolute necessity for giving an assured supply to all canals in the *rabi* season and stated this only would be assured by the means of a Barrage.

More alternatives came between 1910 and 1912 in October the Government of India submitted the whole scheme to the Secretary of State, who appointed a Committee of Engineers in London, to report thereon. The Committee reported against the scheme and the Secretary of State declined to sanction the project the objections raised were referred to the Government of Bombay.

The report of the London Committee was received by the Government of Bombay in March 1914. They refused to accept the views of the London Committee as to the prematureness for improving the present condition of Irrigation in Sindh. They made tentative proposals including the Barrage, the Rohri Canal, a Right Bank Canal and for a new head to the Eastern Nara supply channel.

In March 1916, the Government of India approved of the preparations of the revised plans and estimates, for a complete project for a Barrage below the Sukkur gorge, with two large canals, taking off above it, on the Right and Left Banks of the Indus, to provide perennial irrigation to the area commanded. The Inspector of Irrigation also approved, in a separate note, the scheme.

In May 1916, an outline project was prepared and approved but owing to the War nothing was done between May 1916 and June 1918 when the preparation of the project was vigorously taken in hand. The complete scheme was submitted to the Government of Bombay by the Commissioner in Sindh, in July 1920. The total amount of all estimates was about rupees 18½ crores. The Government of Bombay placed the approved scheme for approval of the Government of India on 30th July 1920 requesting the final sanction of the Secretary of State. It was then placed before the Commons and House of Lords in August 19. When accepted it was named Sukkur Barrage Canals Project 1919-20.

The estimated cost of all these great works on the river was Rs 569 lakhs or £3,800,000 sterling. The Assuan Dam in Egypt cost £2,900,000. Thus the Sukkur Barrage and Canal Project provided sufficient water for the eventual cultivation of the following areas in British and Khairpur territories:

823,000 acres of rice  
1,739,000 acres of cotton, *jawari* etc.  
3,338,000 acres of *rabi* crops (wheat, oil seed, etc.)

Total 5,900,000 acres of cultivation annually, in a total area in British and Khairpur territories. This was an increase of 3,522,000 acres over the then existing

average cultivation of 2,236,000 acres annually. The total cost of the project worked out at Rs 1,836 lakhs or £12,240,000 For comparison it may, be stated that the total area in it was 8,460,000 acres while the total cultivation was 5,400,000 acres. Thus the Sukkur Barrage Project would provide for 500,000 acres of more cultivation annually than there were in the whole of Egypt.

The advantages of the constant supply to be given by the new canals were very great. The date for opening the canal, each year, would be announced weeks before hand, so that cultivators would know exactly when to make their preparations. From the time they were opened, till the day they closed, (at the end of September), the cultivators would be absolutely certain of obtaining their full supply at the fullest level of their crops, so that all the past uncertainty and fluctuation would vanish, and the cultivator be sure of a good crop, so far as the water was concerned.

There was not the least doubt that once a good reliable supply was provided and the cultivator was confident of it, and could foresee his requirements of labour and seed, the *rabi* sowings could increase enormously, and eventually every, drop of, water available would be utilized. This was the invariable experience in the Punjab and elsewhere. Yet the full area would gradually spread over the next 30 years after the completion of the canals.

It was felt that the total cultivable area would reach 81percent of the cultivable area. The then area under cultivation was about 43.5 percent of the cultivable. It would gradally, increase, it was expected, in the next 30 years to about 81 percent. As rice extended rapidly under good and constant supply of water it was felt that there would be a large, almost immediate, increase in cultivation the moment the new canals were opened.<sup>40</sup> The project forecast, could therefore, seem to provide a very safe estimate of the probable growth of cultivation. The fulfillment of the prophecy lay beyond the days of the British raj.

<sup>40</sup> The following statement showed the present and estimated cultivation under the whole scheme .The increase was more rapid on the rise canals.

	Acres
Present annual cultivation (area now commanded)	2,036,037 43.50%
Total culturable area under the project	6,529,705
Anticipated cultivation 10 years after	3,440,288
% of culturable	52%
Anticipated cultivation 20 years after	4,060,828
of culturable	65%
Anticipated cultivation 30 years after	5,308,408
% of culturable	81%

On the Punjab perennial canals the actual intensity of annual cultivation was well over 90% of the cultivable area, while in some of the largest rice areas in Sindh, the existing annual cultivation exceeded 74% of the cultivable area.

*Musto. The Sukkur Barrage Project, 1923, p. 41.*



There were some indications of the enormous increase, expected in the export of commodities such as wheat, cotton, rice etc, which were then in world-wide demand. It was believed that the figures shown for exports would necessitate doubling the existing capacity of the Port of Karachi and possibly increasing the capacity of the North-Western Railway; while numerous feeder railways would find lucrative field of enterprise in carrying the produce to the main railway. Apart from the direct revenue from the sale of, water<sup>41</sup> and land on which the productivity of the scheme was calculated, there was the likelihood of further great indirect gains to the Province due to an enormous increase in traffic both by rail and sea; while increased trade and wealth in the state would react on income tax, and other sources of revenue. Yet no credit could be taken for any of these gains to Government because of the heavy expenditure in the extension of the Barrage project. Besides, it was expected that the scheme would have important beneficial and political effects both in Sindh and Baluchistan.

Approximate quantities of crops in the Barrage Canal areas:

PATTERN OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION		
Crops	As grown at present	Anticipated after final development
	Tons	Tons
Wheat	686,000	935,000
Rice	280,000	515,000
Cotton	52,000	190,000
Jawar & Other Crops	300,000	575,000
Exports	183,000	1,380,000

The final capital invested would come to Rs 1,836 lakhs, and the net annual return at 14.6percent represented a profit net to Government (after paying all interest charges) of 8.6percent on the capital outlay, or a net surplus of Rs 158 lakhs per annum for the benefit of the general revenues of the Province. All this lay in the womb of time. It was an independent Pakistan that was to reap benefit of this toil and tears. Not until we examine the present conditions can we be sure of the rosy picture of expectations. But we are in a position to take a glance of the prevailing conditions within a decade of the birth of the project.

<sup>41</sup> "There can be no doubt that the Hakabo (water rate) has from the beginning been liable to variation and adjustment to meet the expenditure from time to time incurred upon the canals. This liability was definitely asserted by Mr. Frere in 1885 and has been repeated at intervals since that year. The estimated return was 194 lakhs from water rates alone."

*Preliminary Manual of irrigation for Sind, 29th September 1910.*

Looking into the reports of the Sindh Administrative Committee, 1934 we learn that since 1932-33 receipts realized from land sales and leases were being utilized for meeting each year, a part of the interest on capital. In the very first year of the working of the Barrage Canals (1932-33), although contrary to expectations, there was a net surplus of Rs.19.8.6 lakhs over working expenses. The estimated figures for 1933-34 and 1934-35 were Rs. 27.27 and Rs. 21.87 lakhs. On this basis, by the end of 1934-35 the amount of Barrage earnings (gross revenue minus working expenses) appropriated to general revenues would be Rs 69 lakhs as shown below:

<i>Year</i>	<i>Amount</i>
	lakhs of Rs
1932-33 ( <i>Kharif</i> Season Only)	19 86
1933-34 (Revised Estimate)	27.27
<u>1934-35 (Budget Estimate)</u>	<u>21.87</u>
	Rs. 69.00

This showed that the barrage revenues played great part in avoiding the revenue deficits of the Government of Bombay and in balancing its budget. The picture was, indeed, rosy.

The Barrage was opened in January 1932, but the work of construction continued for many months afterwards. The, construction estimate of the project was not closed till September 1933. There was appreciable capital expenditure during the next few years. This was a normal feature of all newly opened canals. For this the Province of Sindh had to borrow money from the Government of India, as in the past.

As already, stated the future productivity of the Barrage revenues were a matter that would take time.<sup>42</sup> Putting aside the debt and Interest the capacity of the new project for increased cultivation and revenue there was little or no doubt. What really weighed on the minds of the architects of the scheme was the important question of the repayment of the capital expenditure over the construction of the Barrage and ways and means to pay it back to the Central Government from whom these sums were loaned inclusive of interest. Among the blessings of the British rule in India the Sukkur Barrage is a monumental achievement. But irrigation in most parts of India was neglected on the whole by the British with dire consequences to the future of our country.

We have already given, I trust, a fair account of the land policy, if any, under the Government of the Mirs and on the occupation of Sindh by Sir Charles Napier In

<sup>42</sup> Report of the Sind Administrative Committee, 1934, 9.41.

the economy, of Sindh as elsewhere in India, land was the most important part of the people's wealth. In case it was existence itself. No part of the administration was so difficult and complicated as the relation of the people to land. Even to the natives of the country a study of land policy and its many complexities are a challenge more so to a people who were total strangers to the country its customs and its language and people as the British were. The total political chaos which invariably follows an invasion leaves the country a political and economic wreck. The occupation of Sindh presented its many problems owing to which land revenue, tenures etc, were perhaps the most difficult to solve and even understand. While the Deccan puzzle was solved by the adoption of the rayatwari tenure, Sindh posed a different challenge by its zamindari land settlement.

As in the Deccan, so in Sindh the early lessons in land policy for the lack of proper knowledge and experience were dearly, bought. The Bombay Government went on blundering and changing and chopping the settlements in Sindh, first trying one settlement, then another, and yet a third, until they found they were in a sorry mess. This sad story began with the utter lack of any data to work on which made even a rough revenue settlement impossible. Mr. Frere, Commissioner of Sindh, wrote to Lord Elphinstone, Governor of Bombay, on 12th January 1855

*My Lord,*

*Sindh is, very differently situated from any of our old possessions and even from most of our recent acquisitions ....*

*There is at present no survey, or plans of a single district in Sindh. ... .. The boundaries of no single Collectorate are accurately laid down, few of the purgunna boundaries, or of canals are perfect, there is no attempt to mark boundaries, and the greater portions of the Collectorates is a blank, and has not been filled in at all There is not even a list of estates or fields except those of Thar and Parkar. I doubt whether there is a tolerably correct list of even villages of more than half a dozen of the 66 districts (kadarares) into which the Province is divided....<sup>43</sup>*

In this respect Sindh was far worse of than most of the recent British acquisitions. In the Deccan there was some possibility to find a list of villages from the district officers, but for, some generations past this was impossible in Sindh and if any divisions were found they were subject to constant alterations. The early British Collectors adopted any divisions in existence - there were no headquarter

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<sup>43</sup> Sel. Rec. Bom Govt. No XVIII. p. 3.

stations, offices or establishments – all were subject to fluctuations. We are familiar with this administrative landscape under Napier.

By the time Frere came the village headman and his accountant and other village officers had ceased to be; their emoluments confiscated, their power undermined as if they were inimical to good Government. Several officers, though in charge of the district, because they had not moved about sufficiently, hardly knew anything of the local conditions prevailing, in spite of having been there several years. What a sorry description of the early Sindh administration and what a contrast to the Deccan under Elphinstone and his co-workers.

Mr. Frere, therefore, suggested a rough survey settlement by appointing experienced officers in charge of districts. He proposed in each Collectorate an able officer with a view to give him leisure requisite for inquiries and have a deputy who would later relieve the officer of most of his current duty and gain experience and practice of a valuable kind.

The first object was to settle the *dehs* or villages each of which was to form a unit of territorial division, such a list of *dehs* could be examined with the aid of the zamindars and all continued within one unbroken ancient boundary known to the cultivator as having been recognised by them selves as far back as the time of the Kulloras. A *deh* was not to be conterminous with one or more estates or zamindaris. Many *dehs* contained a number of separate zamindaris and some single zamindar comprised of several *dehs*.

In the regions of the desert or hills there may have been *dehs*, or in certain parts of the Province which were waste for generations it was impossible to trace them. In such a case fresh divisions were made, varying in size according to the prospect of future cultivation, the necessity for recording grazing or similar rights but all unnecessary minuteness was to be carefully avoided. There was to be no haste because the country was barren or thinly populated.

It was to be ascertained from the jagir records and reports of District officers etc; the names of persons claiming to be either zamindars or holders of jagirs or rent – free land in any village.

The classification of soil whether high or low sandy or clayey, impregnated with salt or soda or free from either; how it was, or may be supplied with water (by wheel, *moke* or *sylabee*); whether it was adapted for *kharif* or *rabi* crops, and what was usually grown; whether it required any, and what fallow or manure regarding all arable land- these were never to be omitted.

The ordinary tenure in Sindh was that of the zamindar or land holder, who exercised wholly or in part the privileges of the land owner. The extent of such privileges varied according to custom, from that of absolute proprietorship of the land, subject to the payment to Government of whatever may be customary government share of, the produce down to that of an ill-defined and often disputed claim to levy a *lapa* or rent on all cultivated land. Sometimes the zamindar was also the cultivator, or the cultivator was removable at the zamindar's pleasure; at others the cultivator was quite independent of the zamindar, and claimed all but the name of the landholder.

In some districts there was a third party who bore a certain part of the expenses of cultivation, and levied a distinct share of the produce, of which there were often four shares - the Government, the zamindar, the *maktedar*<sup>44</sup> (bankers), and the *Hari* (cultivator). Where the *maktedars* were found, the zamindar sometimes disappeared, or his claim was merged in that of the *maktedar*.

According to Mr. Frere it would be well to bear in mind that the inquiry was one of simple facts and to what were the rights claimed and exercised by each of the above mentioned parties concerned, in the best times of the former regular Governments. *It is a subject* wrote Frere, *which has never been carefully, dispassionately or thoroughly investigated by parties possessing the time precious information and other requisites to form a correct judgment.* The Mirs were inclined to push to the utmost their despotic claims to uncontrolled authority over land, while the British revenue officers, who declined to acknowledge anything like private property in land, issued proclamations in express terms abolishing all rights to those of landlords, reducing the cultivators, whether zamindar or *hari* to a tenant – at – will holding his land direct from Government.

In some parts of the country the *hari* was content to be called a labourer. In others he asserted a right to cultivate as long as he duly paid the Government share,

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<sup>44</sup> The normal arrangement is however complicated by the presence of a sort of middleman - lessee (*maktedar*) who holds from the zamindar and employs the zamindar's tenants.

Lessees in Sindh form an important class, consisting of bunyas who in all matters step into the place of, the zamindar, from whom they may hold a lease, or consecutive leases, running over a long term of years. They are wholly responsible for all cultivation operations and pay the assessment to Government directly. Ordinarily the management of land is their main source of livelihood and in many cases their avocation .

These men live by agriculture, and any classification of the agricultural population must necessarily find a place for them...

Sometimes these middlemen, or men of the same class, acquire the entire rights of an estate, thus ousting the original zamindar, or amass an estate in other ways. In such cases they become virtually zamindars themselves, and are usually termed "Bunya zamindars"

*Census of 1921.*

and his landlord's quit—rent (or *lapa*. Where such a tenant right was claimed, it could not be set aside, except on clear failure of the *hari* to establish any prescriptive title.

Reference was made to the jagir Department before the settlement of the villages to know what *jagirs*, *puttadaris*, *hisadars*, *minafidars* or other concessions of or exemptions from Government assessment, were registered in the jagir Department as allowed in the village. All discrepancies were to be pointed out to the Government. An effort was also made to study *batiai*, *kusras*, *churuksumaris* etc., and such tenures. To fix the mode and amount of assessment was, therefore, the most important and difficult part of the settlement officer's task. Whatever the mode of assessment it was always expressed in grain and converted at a fair average into the money rate which was fixed. This facilitated re-adjustment as prices varied.

Whenever the cultivator wished to secure a lease, either of a village or any portion of it every encouragement was afforded him to do so, for terms not exceeding thirty years. But for such leases the sanction of the Commissioner was necessary. The zamindars were permitted to sink wells after satisfying that the lessee was the real zamindar. The water rates and privileges and jagirdars were to be carefully inquired into and recorded. The water rates were merged into the general assessment and care was taken to keep them distinct; all claims to exemption from water rates were closely examined and recorded.

As in the Deccan so in Sindh the ancient custom for allowing a small remission (*mamool*, *seeree* etc.) to the Patell as remuneration for his duties as a revenue officer was revived and defined. Care was taken to establish it as a purely official allowance and to provide for its resumption in case of neglect of duty. Further the settlement officer was to bring to the notice of the Magistrate all Patells who he thought could be trusted with judicial powers. One of the important requisites for this authority was the ability to read and write. Besides the Patell the village accountant (*putwari* or *canongoe*) was also revived. Under the native Government they had been suppressed and neglected and the British as formerly mentioned, had obliterated all trace of the office. It was now realized that these officials could be of immense use to survey officers. The experiment had been a great success in the Punjab.

The System of leases were, with a few exceptions, considered failures and ruinous to the zamindars having thrown them into the clutches of the Bania moneylender. This could be illustrated by the fall in prices. The changes which influenced these matters were as the Collector said beyond the reach of human

foresight.<sup>45</sup> It was, therefore, no surprise that the revenues fluctuated and that the results of even the most liberal settlement was unsatisfactory both to the zamindar and the revenue officer. Hence no future lease settlement from the past jumma was possible, no gross or net produce of any village could be ascertained and the existing establishment were not equal or efficient in performing the duty. No accounts were maintained by zamindars, if any, it was by the Bania to whom the crop was mortgaged.

Captain T. R. Steurt, Collector of Upper Sindh wrote: As we are aware this is the most expensive mode of collection, demoralizing to the cultivator and prone to fraudulent practices. Even where we realized the grain taken as revenue, we have been at a loss what to do with it. In seasons of plenty, it has rotted in our granaries, and sale after sale has been notified without attracting a purchaser. The Commissioner agreed with this opinion. He was glad that this most important subject occupied the Collector's attention.

To him it was quite clear that as one passed through the country the condition of the zamindar and of the cultivator had not improved under their rule. It was even doubtful whether the total extent of cultivation had much increased, there was, besides, no evidence of the zamindar being richer or much better off, than he was under the oppressive rule of the Amirs. The zamindars would rather have the *buttai* than any fixed assessment felt the Commissioner. The *buttai* he wrote, though squeezed as much as it could from the cultivator, yet it was preferred to other fashions of assessment which exercised indiscriminate pressure on his resources.<sup>46</sup>

Some of the prominent mistakes for which the British administration was guilty for were: 1) substitution of *buttai* for *kasghi* and cash-rents; 2) the abolition of petty emoluments enjoyed by zamindars and; 3) the extensive suppression of his agency in management of his cultivators. But perhaps the worst error was the leasing out the whole country without any accurate knowledge of what they were leasing or to whom, at excessive rents, and with no provision for keeping accounts.

If in the Deccan it was the *ryot* against the village *Bania* here in Sindh it is the Muslim zamindar versus the Hindu capitalist. Lieutenant Lewis Pelly, wrote, from Shikarpur.<sup>47</sup> I respectfully hazarded an opinion; that in the event of Government continuing to grant leases, the Hindu should, equally with his

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<sup>45</sup> Letter, 24th January 1854

<sup>46</sup> Letter, 28th March 1854

<sup>47</sup> Letter, 25th November 1854

Mussulman partner be recognised and held responsible. If this was done, the Hindoo would doubtless induce the zamindar to cultivate more carefully and in every way to become more exact. Aware of their own short-comings and fault the British administrators, whether early or late, were always anxious to find a victim for their folly. Similar errors ruined the Deccan under better administrators than those in Sindh.

To the Commissioner their best chance of success was to remove all artificial obstacles to the accumulation of wealth, to render the possession of land certain, to avoid over taxing its cultivators and to free the laborer from all artificial restraint and leave him at liberty to carry his labour to the best market. All this was easily said - what were the effort? Aware of their limitations Mr. Frere wrote: But I need not remind you how much we have yet to do of our legitimate share of this task in ascertaining and defining rights to land, in introducing certain and moderate assessment, and in freeing the laborer from these bonds which place him more in the position of a serf of the soil than a free agent.<sup>48</sup> He was indeed, wise when he said that what Sindh needed was sound revenue regulations which he believed would do more than constant uncertainty and interference by Government officials.

The revenue regulation issued by Sir Napier in 1846 recognized the advantage of substituting for the ancient method a system of money payments which was attempted but with, as we know, little success. In April 1848 Sir George Clerk, Governor of Bombay, who visited Sindh appointed, Mr. Pringle for investigation. Mr. Pringle said that it was unfortunate that they had not availed of the zamindars help to understand the old revenue system. They could have, he said, compounded for a short term of years with the zamindars for a fixed amount either in grain or cash, and where zamindars were not found a similar agreement could have been made with the village communities; time would have matured their plans for a more permanent settlement.

It was Frere, we know, who was in favour of a rough survey settlement. This settlement went on till 1862. By that time about one third of the Province had been surveyed at a cost of Rs. 8 ½ lakhs but no settlement had been made.

Sindh having been placed under Bombay, its administration had of necessity to be placed in the hands of the officers whose earlier career and training had all been acquired in the Presidency. They came to Sindh prepossessed in favour of the Deccan system and so deeply were they steeped in the notions ingrained in them by the working of the *ryotwari* system of the Daccan that they found it

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<sup>48</sup> Letter, 15th January 1855



difficult to believe that another system could show superior advantages.<sup>49</sup> Though nearly twenty years had passed since the occupation of Sindh the letter of the Government of India 1865 shows how dark conditions were regarding their land policy: The Governor General is anxious that the tenures of land in Sindh should be carefully ascertained and settled on their merit both as regards the conflicting interest of different parties and their connection with the state. He has little doubt but that proprietary rights in the soil do exist throughout the Province and that it only requires the application of knowledge and experience of the subject to develop and record them. This is enough to show that even the basic knowledge like what the 'land tenures' were or 'proprietary rights in soil' was still to be properly ascertained.

Matters had now come to such a pass that the Board consisting of His Excellency the President the Honourable Mr. Rogers and the Honourable Mr. Gibbs, put their heads together to extricate the zamindars from the ruin which the various settlements in Sindh had brought upon them. The minutes recorded by them in 1874 were extremely illuminating.

The upshot of this conference was at first a great hesitation. as to what to do under the circumstances. Accordingly His Excellency ordered a further consideration and further minutes-were written and eventually on 10th March 1875, the Governor of Bombay issued a resolution by which the fallow diffused<sup>50</sup> settlement which had ruined the zamindari was abolished and full rates were

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<sup>49</sup> There is a long correspondence called "*Papers relating to Revenue in Sind*" which give a deep insight in the land tenures and the controversy carried on with the Government of India on the suitability of different systems of settlement in Sindh. The volume is of 500 pages and has very valuable information on land tenures in Sindh.

<sup>50</sup> It is possible that on the basis of the State being the owner of the soil in the Bombay Presidency, and the holder of the land being merely a rayot paying a rent for his occupation ademand for rent of land occupied by not cultivated might be justified. Such a justification is altogether absent in the zamindari tenure under which the zamindar is the land owner of the soil and the settlement made with him guarantees him an immunity from assessments over fallows.

The figures, however, show that fully 777,000 acres have been forfeited to Government & almost 32 lakhs of rupees have been paid to Government Treasury to save the land from forfeiture. If we were to supply the missing figures of certain districts on the system of averages, we shall be well within the mark, if we put the total of forfeited area to 10 lakhs, & the amount paid to save the forfeiture at rupees 40 lakhs.

These figures will give any one a pause. In one word they are appalling. Enormous quantity of land from private ownership passed into the hands of Government. It was a proven fact that the fallow rules had played havoc.

"What was the reason for the zamindars to allow the land to pass out of their hands? Their answer could be summed up in six words "want of water and of labour". Both these factors were outside the control of the zamindar. Report of the Members of the Fallow Rules Committee. Sind 1925 pp. 58, 59.

levied on cultivated land only. The old practice of demanding a land revenue on the entire estate inclusive of the Waste and fallow was given up.

The ryot ploughed up his entire field but sowed only a portion, this was soon exhausted and he shifted to a new waste. With the zamindars his entire land, including waste, had been assessed. Then the new system came in force which, as mentioned, meant assessment only on cultivated ground and a lien of fields that were left fallow. This new settlement lessened the size of the holding and assessed only cultivated lands with a graded rate on fallow according to the number of years the land lay fallow and the crops it grew.<sup>51</sup>

The revision of assessment was slow and several years elapsed before a taluka was completed. In the interval they had Irrigational Settlement. This gave so much satisfaction that it was decided to adopt the system permanently. The villages were arranged according to the facility of water and disposal of produce at a market. Rates were then prescribed for the different methods of irrigation in each group of villages. The pitch of the assessment was guided by the trend of prices, the value of land, the state of the canals and the economic condition of the cultivating classes. This form of settlement began in 1882-83 and gradually extended over the whole Province with only a few places in Karachi district and some parts of Thar and Parkar. This settlement went through some revision imparts which only affected the character of the grouping and the scale of rates.

The leading features of this settlement were:

- 1) Land only paid assessment when cultivated.
- 2) The rate of assessment depended on the class of water supply.
- 3) Remissions were allowed on a most liberal scale in cases of total and partial failure of crops.
- 4) For clear years of fallow were allowed free of assessment without lapse of occupancy rights.

Experience proved the system to be admirably adopted to lands settled on inundation canals. The assessment was treated as a consolidated charge: nine-tenths represented the price of water and were credited to irrigation, while the balance was treated as land revenue and credited to that head. A reduced assessment was charged on land watered by private canals, the clearance of which was not undertaken by Government, the deduction being made on sliding scale varying with the length of the canal.

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<sup>51</sup> Though “all restrictions and fallow rules were set aside” in 1884, in only three years’ time, this solemn promise was set aside because of the arguments of local officers the Bombay Government reimposed the fallow rules on the Sind zamindars. The sanctity of the contract, and the faith on which the creation of privileged estates was abandoned, were no matter for consideration. Fallow Committee, Sind, 1925, p. 58.

This history of land revenue would be incomplete without an account of the desert lands. Here the greater part of the original landed proprietors were Rajputs whose love of fixed landed tenure was too well known. The Amirs of Sindh treated the desert districts as kalsa or crown lands. They therefore retained the proprietary rights of land in their own hands; that was so because they granted lands to certain tribes and individual cultivators. At the conquest the British succeeded to the proprietorship of the soil. Hence the Government was the proprietor to whom all cultivators, not exempted, paid a share of the produce. So long as a cultivator did not desert the field it would not be taken from him. Loss of land would distress a Raj put whose greatest prize was a bit of land which he looked upon as his own.<sup>52</sup>

When the British came the cultivators held possession of whatever land they cultivated and in absence of any fixed tenure, they were only tenants at will. Hence there was no guarantee for undisturbed possession of land and this made them feel insecure. A Rajput's estimate of the value of land in fact corresponded in a great measure to the permanency or otherwise of the tenure by which it was held; he valued permanent tenure.

The system of assessment in force in the Thar and Parkari was this, every field was inspected and the produce estimated; the Government fixed and converted into money at the market price of grain at the time, and collected. The cultivators were allowed to gather corn when ripe and thus some of the fields were assessed; while others were assessed after the corn was gathered, and others again towards the close of the season were assessed by the standing stalks alone, the grain having been both gathered in and consumed or disposed of.

Such a system kept the cultivator in suspense as to the assessment till they had either consumed or disposed off the produce. Besides, there was no means of refuting the unjustness of the levy or convincing the authorities that they were exacting an undue share of the produce. The assessment was only an approximation to an equal levy if even that could be attained. The assessment was also dependent on the caprice of the revenue officers which gave no satisfaction to the cultivator.

Yet Raikes wrote in his memoirs: There is now every reason to hope that the same generous policy by which the British, Government has reclaimed those wild daring marauders will before many years are past have regenerated them in these present peaceful pursuit. The dangerous crises which attend the child of tender years, and not less the body politic, in its progress, from chaos to infancy

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<sup>52</sup> S. N. Raikes, Memoirs of Thar and Parkar Districts of Sind. 1854. ip. 49.

and infancy to manhood, have been passed; and the Desert with its fixed revenue assessment, judicial system, police arrangement, and last, though not least, its schools, is in a peaceful, contented and thriving state as could be expected or desired. Though this may be a little overdrawn it is fairly true of the political peace that prevailed, not only in Sindh, but since their arrival, over the whole of India.

With so unsettled a land policy over the richer lands of Sindh, the deserts of Thar and Parkar had hardly any attention, down the years. Says the Gazetteer: the deserts of Thar and Parkar are still unsettled. In these was introduced a system of revenue called Tali, from tal, the local term for patches of low ground between sand hills on which it was possible to raise a crop after suitable rain. Even here the area cultivated each year varied, therefore, there was fixed rent graduated according to the average productive area.

It would not be out of place to give a survey of the land tenures under the British rule at its close. Land tenures throughout the Province were of an extremely simple character. Classing the land under to heads Assessed to the State Revenue and Alienated we found, it in the occupation of:

- a) Land proprietors - a comparatively small but important class;
- b) Holders of estates of a few hundred acres - the middle class gentry;
- c) A large body of peasant proprietors, all paying revenue direct to Government or to the Alienee to whom the Government rights in land were transferred.

The other agricultural classes were:

- a) Tenants possessing a right of occupancy;
- b) Tenants-at-will.

The tenants-at-will though many of them passed their lives in the same estate possessed no right of occupancy and were subject to the conditions imposed by their landlords. Their position in course of time improved with the introduction of the-settlement, which put an end to the monopoly of land previously held by large landholders. Tenants possessing the right of occupancy were in north Sindh. There were hereditary cultivators (Manrosi Hari<sup>53</sup>) with the right of

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<sup>53</sup> Manrosi hari literally 'hereditary cultivator' is a tenant possessing a right of occupancy which is inheritable. It is also transferable at the will of the tenant, and irrespective of that of the superior holder, or zamindar, whose right in the land is strictly limited to a quit rent, which generally he cannot enhance. In fact the zamindar is in these cases simple in person possessing a certain lien on the land, and although he is the superior holder, he is not allowed to pay the Government demand, which right exclusively belongs to the "Manrosi hari". This tenure is prevalent in the Rohri Division and in the Sukkur taluka, but less so in

occupancy being heritable. Their lands were recognised by the payment of a fixed quit—rent forever and the cultivator became the owner of the land with every right of ownership.

Under the British village communities were divided into principal zamindars, minor zamindars, petty occupants (also calling themselves zamindars) and the haris or cultivators of large holdings. Since Napier's times the zamindar came to be regarded as middlemen and the ryot began to have their own rights as holders of land recognised by the new Government. The policy of the British was to foster this desire of independence so as to bring them closer to the State. This was done all over Western India.

Besides the land revenue these petty landholders paid cesses as were forced from them under the name of lapo. Lapo was given in consideration of services by the zamindar. The *desh khurch* (village expenses) was an extra cess called malikano or zamindari used to entertain Government officers, guests etc. This was payable in kind or cash. Yet the right of the zamindar was never abrogated and was even upheld by the Civil Courts. But the claim was gradually disappearing in certain districts of Sindh as new, waste lands came under the plough. These new occupants of waste land paid no lapo to the zamindar. Lapo could only be enforced provided it was entered in the settlement register.

The position of the zamindars in Sindh was not what it once was. Estates were continually suffering disintegration owing to division of property which inevitably took place on the death of the zamindar. At times it passed into the hands of the *nouveaux riche* by the foreclosure of a mortgage incurred during the unfortunate diffused settlement. The breaking up of the large estates formerly held by old families became a matter of concern to Government. The Irrigation settlement, the Encumbered Estates Act and other measures on behalf of the zamindars arrested the decay of the landlords. Subject to the payment of land revenue the survey tenure conferred the right of occupancy to be heritable and transferable. Occupancies were of two kinds those granted to capitalists and those to yeomen peasants. In both cases the occupancy was limited to twenty years.

Under the heads of alienations were: 1) jagirs; 2) pattadaris; 3) khairats or charities; 4) garden grants.

When the Province fell to the British vast extent of land was held in jagir. When alienations first came under consideration it was decided to re-grant all

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the rest of the Sukkur and Shikarpur Divisions, whilst south of Larkana and the territory of Khairpur it is almost unknown", Census of 1921.

cultivated lands subject to one-fourth of their net proceeds and resume all waste lands, while land granted for service civil or military were to be resumed on the death of the existing incumbent. But it was soon felt necessary to make a distinction between various jagirs:

- Class I - Jagirs granted prior to the accession of the Talpurs (1783);
- Class II - Jagirs granted by Talpurs up to the year 1810;
- Class III - Jagirs granted between 1810 and 1833;
- Class IV - Jagirs granted between the last mentioned year and the conquest of the British.

The first class were to be continued undiminished and unassessed. The second were two distinct classes of jagirdars. One were to pay only one-fourth of the proceeds and only one-third of their waste lands were resumed; the other were known as Sindh Sirdars and succession was settled on merit. This resulted in alienating only one-sixth of the jagir land. In class three jagirs were granted undiminished but subject to the payment of one-fourth proceeds for one succession after the death of the incumbent at the date of the battle of Meeanee and the fourth class, the jagir to lapse on the death of the incumbent at the date of the battle of Meeanee. All class of jagirdars paid 5 percent on account of local fund and the water rate (*hakabo*) if they received water from Government canals.

The Pattadari grant was of Afghan origin; they were lands bought by Afghan from Sindhi proprietors and held by deeds of reduced assessment. When the Afghans were driven out by the Talpurs they recognised these grants of land and these were confirmed by the British Government on ground of long enjoyment. The Pattadari became a rent charge a fixed portion of revenue of certain lands being paid over by Government to the Pattadar. There were also charitable grants to holymen, shares of revenue, money, grain which were confirmed on ground of length of enjoyment. Garden grants comprised lands (1) held without assessment, and (2) held on the quarter ordinary assessment on garden land. These were heritable and continuable with certain conditions they could be mortgaged, sold or otherwise transferred.

We know that the land revenue and irrigation revenue in Sindh was collected in the form of a combined assessment. We have already mentioned the proportion in which it was collected. In Sindh the State was entitled to take a fixed proportion of the net profits of the zamindar. In theory, therefore, if any rise or fall in the value of net produce took place the gain or loss was shared by the state with the zamindar. But in actual practice the value of the State share was fixed periodically and remained unchanged during the settlement period, which in Sindh was normally 20 years. In the period great change may take place in the trend of prices. Thus there were enormous variations and the zamindar may find

himself paying to the state either much less, or much more, than its due share of the net produce. Thus matters stood in 1934.<sup>54</sup>

The normal period was fixed at 20 years; but when the 'Barrage Settlement was introduced in July 1932 the rates of assessment were guaranteed for only five years. The reason for this was that owing to the slump in agricultural prices which then prevailed, the rates had to be fixed at a much lower figure than had formerly been estimated and it was considered inadvisable to commit Government to these low rates for a long period of years. To have done so would indeed, have been to sacrifice forever all hopes of making the Barrage a financial success.

So far there had been little sign of an improvement in prices hence Government was considering the grant of general remission in the Barrage area because the prices had gone down. This was regarded as an innovation in Sindh land revenue administration. They were applied to the non Barrage area in 1931; since then it had become an established practice everywhere. Once it became a practice that remissions were given for low prices while there was no provision for raising rates during the settlement period because of a rise in prices, it was clear that Government would lose on the fall in prices and gain nothing on the rise. It was further felt that with the coming of responsible Government the Sindh Legislative Assembly would make it next to impossible to raise the assessment rates. And no popular minister would dare to propose a rise in land revenue rates. With such a future in politics the prospect of the Barrage being a financial success presented a challenge.

But this was not a result responsible landholders and politicians would wish to bring about. It was realized that a modification of the Sindh land revenue system was desirable, which while retaining the merit of the existing system would keep the question of land assessment within the sphere of administration, instead of unnecessarily into the field of politics. Once again there followed a short period of suggestions and counter suggestions to meet the on coming political changes that would surely affect the economy of the Province also; but greater political upheavals were soon to engulf not Sindh alone but the World; the Second World War.

Though land and its resources was the mainstay of the economy of Sindh there were a few other sources of income like spirit, opium and salt. Under the Talpurs liquor was abhorred and drunkenness punished; yet they were not averse to earn a revenue from the forbidden commodity. This was done by selling the monopoly of distillation to the highest bidder. Under the native rulers social

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<sup>54</sup> Report of the Sind Administrative Committee 1934. pp. 37-39.

taboo and religion kept a fair control over this pernicious habit. But with the British, when the rulers themselves indulged in it freely, whatever social barriers that existed and all classes fell victims to the evil habit. It became in, course of time a very inviting source of revenue.

Under the British the right for distil spirits and sell them within specified limits, but without any restrictions continued to be sold by auction till 1887-88. Mr. Charles Peitchard, Commissioner, took steps to introduce the Bombay system. By this the right to distil spirits was separated from the right to sell. License was granted to respectable persons to distil subject to a duty of Rs. 3 to 4 a gallon according to its alcoholic contents. And separate shop license was given for wholesale or retail sale of liquor at principal towns and talukas. Toddy also came in for its share of attraction but had a poor sale.

The control exercised gradually disappeared as it became a revenue attraction. There was a rise in revenue from Rs. 3,59,079 to Rs 4,62,947 lakhs in the five years ending 1886-87 and it went on by leaps and bound as years progressed and foreign liquor<sup>55</sup> continued to capture the market of the well-to-do. But the Bombay system was gradually given up. Soon it was replaced by the "free-supply system". Under it manufacture was separated from sale and there was no monopoly of either. Liquor came from Uran distillery and gur spirit distilled at the Central distillery at Kotri. The distillers were charged a fee for their distilleries which were housed in Government buildings. Liquor from Uran was consumed in Karachi only. Liquor was soon sold at whatever price it could fetch and people were free to procure it from either Uran or Kotri. Retailers were selected by the Collectors on payment of a fee varying from Rs. 500 in towns to Rs. 6 rural areas. There was no restriction on the price of toddy nor a tax on the trees in the Province. The Abkari department was in the hands of district officers under the -Commissioners.

Till 1901 there was scarcely any restriction placed on the drugs<sup>56</sup> in Sindh except the right to sell them by retail farmed out. In that year the cultivation of hemp was forbidden and a quantitative duty imposed on the drugs whether manufactured in Sindh or imported. Licenses were granted for the cultivation of the plant; bhang was placed in Government warehouses under an inspector. Ganja came from Panwel and charas from Amritsar. The retail license was sold at an auction to the highest bidder. Most of these drugs, then as now, had a wide underground circulation. The Government collected a higher revenue from

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<sup>55</sup> In Kurrachee the rate of fees on licenses for the sale of European liquor was raised from Rs. 25 to Rs. 150 which contributed to enhance from this source of income. Administration Report of the Bombay Province (1866 - 1867).

<sup>56</sup> Bhang, Ganja, Charas etc.



spirits than from drugs. These drugs captured, perhaps, a larger number of addicts than liquor. Till the end of the British rule, an empire was established in some of the towns in the--Province both in drugs and liquor. Competing with the indigenous produce was the import of deleterious cheap spirits from Europe which went into lakhs of gallons.

Before the British conquest opium passed from Rajputana to Karachi for export to avoid Bombay because of heavy duty. The Mirs levied a transit duty of Rs. 200 per camel load and realized an annual revenue of about a lakh of rupees. They also levied an excise duty on opium locally sold by means of license, or state contract. These arrangements continued for some time after the conquest.

When the British came opium was consumed throughout Sindh. But the consumption was reduced when the British levied heavy duty on the drug. The consumption varied from district to district. But wherever the Rajput predominated the consumption was heavy especially in Thar and Parkar districts. The new Government introduced the vendors' licenses. The vendors<sup>57</sup> purchased opium from the Collector's store from Jaisalmer. Cultivation of poppy in Sindh was forbidden. In 1900 the Commissioner selected certain farmers of means and respectability who paid nothing for the privilege beyond the duty on the opium sold by them. An establishment was maintained to prevent smuggling. The price at which the farmer sold opium was subject to a maximum and minimum limit to a single person. Later the "single shop" system was introduced under which the right of retail sale was sold by tender separately for each shop. This gave a fair chance to competition. The maximum limit for the selling price was unlimited but there was a minimum limit. The revenue derived within the first years was over two lakhs of rupees. The pernicious effects of this drug are too well-known to need any comment. They destroy both the mind and the body of the addict.

The Native ruler here, as elsewhere in India claimed a share in the profit of salt manufacture which they took as *batai*; but the exact revenue derived from this source was not known. With the British the *batai* was abolished and salt remained untaxed till 1848. About this time certain natives obtained permission to excavate and export salt on the payment of a duty of 12 annas per maund which was the rate of excise duty then in Bombay. This trade was carried on by

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<sup>57</sup> "The measures adopted in 1864-65 substituting Jeysulmere and Bhawalpore for Malwa opium, have been successful. A better description, of opium & one more suited to the taste of the consumers, is now supplied: at a less cost to the people with advantage to the revenue. The aid of the Political Superintendent of Thar and Parkar in this matter has contributed, to the favorable result."

1863 — 64	Rs. 75,752
1864 — 65	Rs. 86,176
Increase	Rs. 10,424

Administration Report of the Bombay Province (1864 — 65)

the Karachi Salt Company on the above terms. But this tax was only an export duty.

It was not till 1861 that Government of India suggested the imposition of a duty on salt consumed in Sindh. The license system adopted. It was contraband to open any salt – work without a license one condition of which was that a duty of 8 as, was to be paid on every maund of salt removed. The same was levied from all neighbouring states importing salt.<sup>58</sup> There were three sources of supply in Sindh, viz.

- 1) excavation of natural deposits;
- 2) manufacture from Kalar; or salt earth, and
- 3) manufacture from brine wells.

Thar and Parkar had numerous salt lakes in that region and Karachi and Hyderabad districts had brine wells; but throughout other parts of Sindh manufacture of salt was from Kalar or salt earth.

The simple machinery consisting of a munshi and two peons, as the staff at each place where the salt was manufactured, withheld or gave permission for the removal of salt at their will. It was found that nearly one – third of the revenue went into their pockets. It was suggested that the revenue on salt should be raised from 8 as. to one rupee a maund. It was decided that salt should be removed from authorised places and by authorised persons. Salt could be removed by permits from the Collector of the district after payment of Government dues. Depots be established from where salt could be issued to traders. To fix a uniform fixed price at Rs. 2 a maund. To place the depot under an inspector of salt customs A number of 20 to 30 peons should mount patrol. No immediate action followed on these proposals till 1877, it was then placed on a footing according to the above scheme. Salt could no longer be manufactured without a license. All old salt works closed and Government opened salt works on the Moach plain which became the sole source of supply in the Sindh Province. These works were called Maurypur after Mr. Maury who was the founder of these salt works. The duty on salt varied from Rs. 2 to Rs. 2 and again to Rs. a., hence the cost of collection remained constant but the revenue varied.

Since 1882 the salt department was controlled by a Collector of Salt Revenue who was also Chief Collector of Customs. The control over salt revenue was conjointly exercised by the District Collector and the Chief Controller. This system worked unsatisfactorily. Hence, in 1903 the salt Committee was to

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<sup>58</sup> The staff for this machinery consists of a Munshi on a pay from Rs. 15 to 25 Rs. assisted by two peons paid 5 to 7 Rs. at each place where the manufacturer was licensed.

consider this system of revenue collection on salt. It was finally decided that the department should be under an Assistant Commissioner of Salt revenue under the Commissioner of Sindh. It was also decided that all restrictions on the sale of salt should be removed. Formerly, as we know, salt could only be sold by licensed vendors which was a valuable safeguard against the dissemination of illicit salt.

These resources, besides land, were not exploited for the first time. They existed even under the Native rulers. But under the British the social taboos which had controlled the consumption of these commodities began to lose their grip; and the East India Company, a commercial body, greedy for revenue, exploited these resources to an unheard of degree. A similar attitude in China had led to the opium wars. In the early 19th century with the advent of imperialism the voice of conscience was silenced; and the West began its political and economic exploitation unparalleled in human history. India was one of its many victims.

Let us now take in consideration cultivation, crops, soil etc, on the advent of the British. Out of 52, 120 square miles, or 645 lakhs of begas, the area of the Province of Sindh in 1853-54, about 151 lakhs, or 2.4 percent only were under cultivation. This was accounted for by large tracts of desert land which Sindh embraced. The proportion of population to the whole area of the Province was 21, and to the cultivated area 871 souls to the square mile, or about 1.42 begas per head.<sup>59</sup>

Of the 15,47,218 begas of cultivated land grain covered 14,32,738 begas or 92.6 percent; oil and other seeds 72,712 or 4.7 percent and cotton, indigo, sugarcane etc., occupied 41,768 begas or 2.7 percent of the cultivation. The cultivated area if distributed over the three Collectorates of this early period, Karachi had for its share 14.8 percent, Hyderabad 43.5 percent and, Shikarpur 41.7 percent. The cultivated area under sugarcane, cotton, tobacco and indigo was 41,434 begas and the total production came to 75,622 maunds.

At the turn of the century the total area of the Province was shown as 2,99,19,289 acres of which 1,49,58,235 acres or almost exactly one half comprising forests, hilly and sterile tracts, were classed as not available for cultivation. Upper Sindh consisted of dense jungle or sterile desert when the British came became gradually the largest area of fertility in the Province. Thanks to John Jacobs, similarly in Thar and Parkar, the extension of irrigation added 3,87,731 to the cultivable acreage.

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<sup>59</sup> Memorandum of the cultivation, produce, consumption etc. of the Produce of Sind. 1853 - 54 p. 45.

Of the cultivable area of 1,49,61,054<sup>60</sup> acres in the six Collectorates only 83,50,363 acres were available for cultivation or about 56 percent but only 33,57,266 or 23 percent were actually under crop. Acres 28, 02, 962 of the 33,57,266 acres in actual cultivation were under canal irrigation and 2,53,457 were irrigated directly from the river; well irrigation was insignificant. The gradual spread of irrigation covered more and more acres under cultivation as already referred to in our account on irrigation. With the Sukkur Barrage was opened a new era of expectations. With the addition of Nawabshah as the seventh collectorate the net cropped area into acres in thousands came to 4,425.

Both under the Mirs and the British land, or rather cultivation had received several names, distinctive of the mode in which it was irrigated.

*Churki* – When the water was raised from a canal, well etc., by artificial means;

*Moke* - when the water course was above the level of the soil and the water ran on the surface but under control;

*Bossi and Sylabi* - When the land was so saturated with moisture that it required no further watering from seed-time to harvest;

*Paneeati* - Sylabi or land well moistened, but what can be irrigated from a wheel as well as a well;

*Suckt or Simm* - Land of a porous nature, which sucks up sufficient moisture from an adjoining river or lake;

*Bund or Baranie* - The rain lands under the British the two broad divisions into which irrigation was divided were perennial and inundation canals. The principles involved were practically the same as those that existed under the Mirs; though with time changes were gradually effected in the assessment of the soil under the mentioned modes of irrigation; quite a few of these ceased to exist with the times.

We have already mentioned the nature of the soil in Sindh but a few more details would not be out of place now. Excepting on the foot of the hills and in the desert,

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<sup>60</sup>	Districts	Cultivable Land
	Karachi	19,60,347 Acres
	Hyderabad	39,31,076 Acres
	Larkana	23,61,076 Acres
	Sukkur	20,52,313 Acres
	Upper Sind	13,42,337 Acres
	Thar and Parkar	34,13,232 Acres

*Gazetteer p. 220*

all the soil of Sindh was alluvial consisting of sand and clay in a very fine state of pulverization. The proportion of sand and clay differ in the soil of different situations, affecting its consistency and porosity, and the percentage of organic matter found present also varied. These differences were indicated by many vernacular names loosely used and often local. The following is a rough classification of the principal varieties of soil.

*Chicki and Kurrura* - These are both stiff clays; the first is on low inundated lands and yields grain; the other is in a bed of hollows in which rice is grown.

*Wari or Vari* - This is the sand thrown up by the river, or drifted by the wind and is deemed fit only for malon cultivation.

*Gussur* - This is a rich loam, formed by the admixture, in the most favourable proportions of Choki and Vari. This soil is considered fit for almost all crops.

*Kacho* - The soil resulting from recent inundation. It is also called *Rio Kacho* if used for rabi cultivation the same year and *pako Kacho* if it has had a season or two to dry and harden. *Mithi* (sweet soil) is a general term applicable to it.

*Rao or Raewari* - Is soil enriched by the hill torrents. It is naturally very varied, differing in consistency as the basis of it is... sandy or loamy.

*Vamasa* - This is a loam in which sand predominates.

*Nor* - A still more sandy soil than the above.

*Kullur* - This is land so salt as to be barren; the soil may be either of the above varieties. These could scarcely be called, soils at all they are saline deposits. But there are soils known as Dangiasi or Dangachht in these soils the salt on the surface could be washed out by irrigation or drainage and may be converted into fertile fields. With the extension of the Begari canal the desert was being gradually changed into arable fields and rich meadows. In desert parts of Thar and Parkar all soil is sand, (Dago), but nevertheless yields small crops of bajri after rain. Cultivation in that district is, however, generally confined to particular situations such as flat valleys and shallow temporary tanks where decayed aquatic vegetation collects.

Land, whether belonging to Hindu or Musalman, was usually cultivated in one or two ways. In one, the zamindar finds the bullocks, and seed and all expenses except labour; the cultivator performs the labour, receiving in return a share of the produce, This was what in Sindh was meant by the zamindar's "Khoo Kasht" In the other, the land was let for the season to the cultivator, who found

bullocks seed etc., as well as labour, merely paying rent to the land owner. This was cultivated by "Moojarat." Land was also cultivated by hired labour; the laborer received fixed wages. All this simplicity disappeared under a series of land revenue experiments, already referred to, under the British. Land and labour were as complex as the land policy, the zamindar and his hari began to feel differently towards one another and relations became complex. These are already, explained.

By far the most extensively grown crop in Sindh was rice, though the Province had in no part where rice was cultivated a greater average rainfall than 10 inches per annum. As a result, it was exclusively an irrigated crop depending on the flow in inundation canals in which was available only from June to September. In spite of this limitation the total area under the crop was about one and a quarter million acres divided between two tracts of very different character, widely separated from one another. The largest acreage was in Larkana, Hyderabad, Karachi and Sindh frontier, the lowest in Nawabshah.

After rice came bajri in order of importance. This grain and Jawar constituted the principal food, as in Maharashtra, of the working classes, Bajri was the more wholesome was more extensively grown, especially in Thar and Parkar and in Nawabshah. It is a very hardy grain and, therefore, easily sustained. In other districts it was more Jowar than bajri, maize, barley and other cereals (vari, ragi and nachni) were cultivated. Gram occupied quite an important place in point of area and also in point of consumption being popularly used in the form of dal and confectionary and also as a feed for horses. Nearly half of the crop was cultivated in the Sindh Frontier District. It was also fairly extensively grown in Sukur and Larkana.

Among oil seeds rapeseed and jambho were, by far, the most important followed at a distance by sesame which also occupied a fairly extensive area. These covered 90 percent of the total area under oilseed.

Of the fibre crops grown, cotton was the only one of real importance, occupying over 99.9 percent of the total area under fibre crops. In fact, of the total area under fibre crops, cotton had the lion's share. Cotton may, therefore, be said the fibre crop of Sindh.

Cotton cultivation in Sindh appeared to be of ancient date but previous to the British conquest all indications suggested that its area may have been very small. Its growth received much stimulus, as all over cotton growing districts in Western India, from the general development of trade after conquest and the extension of irrigation facilities in the Province. It stood fourth after rice, bajri and jowar. Among the reasons for its extension are:

1. Opening of the high level Jamrao Canal in 1900;
2. Reformation and extension of the Nusrat and Dad canal system;
3. Conversion of some of the rice lands into dry crop lands on the Eastern Nara system;
4. Improvements in the inundation canals of the Hyderabad district.

These factors coupled with a cotton market ruling high brought the area under the crop to four lakhs of acres annually by 1924-25. The extension would be influenced by the Sukkur Barrage canals for so far the canals were totally dependent on the state of the river. A slump in prices in 1914-18 had also effected the growth. Thar and Parkar and Nawabshah grew the greatest quantity.

The Egyptian cotton was considered the best and next to it the Bourbon; next again, but considerably inferior, the American and last the Hingunghaut which, however, the Chamber of Commerce pronounced to be superior to any cotton ordinarily exported from Karachi. Here, as in Khandesh and elsewhere, the Government authorised the purchase of 300 acres of excellent land in the neighbourhood of two canals, near Halla in the Hyderabad Collectorate for the purpose of establishing a cotton farm. The reason for such farms all over Western India, where cotton could be grown from Sindh to Dharwar, is a story already told in my earlier works. Expensive experiments in foreign cotton seeds and their failure was an oft repeated story.

The Salaru farm in Sindh was also devoted principally to cotton cultivation. Seven kinds of cotton were tried, and the result seemed to show that New Orleans ( American) and Nankin (not heard of in the Deccan and Karnataka) were the only exotics which promised well. The former gave an out-turn almost equal to that of Sindh Native cotton and cultivation for it was not expensive, while the staple, if it did not deteriorate, was far more valuable. The great drawback to its introduction was the difficulty which the farmer experienced in finding a ready local market. While the Sindh Native cotton grown on the farm gave very favorable results, as also the Nankin, but other non-local and exotic varieties were more or less a total failure. It is a repetition of the failure in Gujerat where American and English experts lacked both experience and knowledge of Indian soil and method of cultivation. The Indian farmer knew better. Even where these experiments were carried out the figures for exotic were very low and as far back as 1868-69 they were 172 acres and in P 69-70 it was 56 acres as compared with 56,820 acres in 1868-69 and 57,677 for 1869-70 for the native variety. Even with the years the exotic made no gains. Climatic conditions soil and methods of cultivation were all suited to the indigenous variety.

The Egyptian and the New Orleans are regarded as the best long-stapled cotton in the world. And even at the turn of the last century the British tried their best to grow this variety on Indian soil. The Administrative Report of 1903-04 expresses thin hope:

“An experimental area was planted in April and May at Dhoro Naro in Thar and Parkar, and the results are so far of great promise. Further extensive experiments are being made, and until their results are known it would be premature to speculate on the success that may be ultimately attained. Should that success be even moderate the result on perennially irrigable lands will be enormous.....”

More than fifty years had passed and not even moderate success had been achieved.

In spite of extensive irrigation facilities in Sindh sugarcane was not an important crop. The total annual acreage in any average year did not exceed about 4,000 acres. About 85 percent of its coverage spread over three districts of Karachi, Hyderabad and Thar and Parkar. Indigo in a normal year occupied about 1000 acres, mostly in Nawabshah district. Tobacco was perhaps, under drugs and narcotics, the only crop grown to any extent in Sindh. It covered about 7000 acres in a normal year. Hyderabad, Sukkur, Nawabshah and Larkana were the only districts where it was cultivated. The cultivation of fruits was almost a neglected branch of agriculture in Sindh though both soil and climate are favorable. Fodder crops were quite popular. Sindh was more pastoral than agricultural.

Cultivation was restricted to the patches of tolerably level land between the sand hills in the district of Thar and Parkar. These patches when cultivated, as well as the sand hills, produced an abundant supply of nutritious grass and stunted bushes. The forage of the desert was esteemed more nutritious than any of the neighbouring districts, and partially accounts for the predilection of the inhabitants to depend more on their flocks and herds, than cultivation for their livelihood, though the scattered nature of the cultivable land and the insecurity of person and property doubtlessly had some effect formerly in determining their livelihood.

Ghi was the staple product of the Thar; and in good seasons was exported in large quantities to Kutch and Gujerat, and also to a smaller extent to Sindh proper. The produce was entirely dependent on the pasture. Some grain, when in plenty was also sent to Gujerat and Kutch. In 1865-66 there was an increase in cultivation due to the Mitrow Canal, which important work was nearly complete. Bajri covered the largest acreage among all the Collectorates in the Province, its nearest rival was Hyderabad.



The importance of irrigation in Sindh cannot be overestimated. This fact when mentioned repeatedly appears dry-as-dust, but the Sindhi knows to his cost, there is a worse thing than dry-as-dust and that is dry-as-dust land when he is depending on it for his existence. It is necessary to understand this fact before one can appreciate the position of the cultivator, and the value of an assured canal water supply to him.

The Sindhi cultivator had plenty of good land, and sufficient labour but nature failed to provide him with an assured supply of water not even rainfall. Naturally he looked to his river, the inexhaustible supply of water flowing past his fields, to satisfy the thirst of his lands. A network of canals would alone be his salvation.

We are told that as regards the effect on the character of the people, and on their methods of cultivation, it made the Sindhi most deleterious. We have already related the rise and fall of the river was beyond the control of the people. And on this phenomena depended his joy and sorrow. The exceptional zamindar was industrious and enterprising and he would prepare his land, sow his crop when the water was available in the canal. The crop appeared flourishing. Suddenly the water in the canal dropped and the crop withered and died. The zamindar again ploughed it out, and again sowed on the next rise of water perhaps with the same result. Some time the water kept steady and the crop matured, but it was possible that this may need three separate sowings and some times all may fail and the cultivator had to be content with a poor crop of jawar or bajri alone.

Hence cultivation became a pure gamble and only the strongest in moral and financial asset could maintain a steady interest in their land and even these could not prevent disastrous failures in their crops. On the other hand a careless and negligent zamindar, in a year would reap almost as good a harvest from a late and carelessly sown crop as his industrious neighbours. The climate was good and given the necessary supply of water which was, uncertain, a good crop would be realized; whilst no amount of care and expense in cultivation would save a crop, if the river frowned. Hence most of the zamindars were careless and lazy and adopted a fatalistic attitude and left the result on the lap of the Gods. The result was the typical Sindhi zamindar and the average cultivation as seen in Sindh.

The principal crops grown in the hot season are rice, jawarip and bajri and cotton. Wheat was grown in inundated lands, in which, the season ending the canal overflows and the water was allowed to sink in the soil by building bunds round the fields. In these fields wheat was grown in winter and the cultivation was called "bosi." Oil seeds were sown in rice lands after the rice had been reaped. In

the whole of Sindh the average Kharif crops were 72 percent of the total cultivation and the rabi only 28 percent.

Famine was unknown in the Indus valley, in which cultivation was independent of rain but the desert portion of Thar and Parkar had cruel experience of it. The year 1868-69 was remembered as one in which the district was almost depopulated.. A large number of cattle perished. Relief works had to be started. But this faded into insignificance before the wide-spread scourge that destroyed lakhs all over Western India, the famine of 1898-1901. Sindh came for its share of this misery in 1898-1899 to be followed with a year of total lack of rain. At the end of the second year 95 percent of the cattle had died, and quite a few were sent to the Nara valley or to Barodah in neighbouring. States. The export of bones from the Shadipalli station rose in one year from 9,557 to 63,167 and maunds of bones from 17,820 to 46,647. Even two-thirds the Camels died.

Yet nothing satisfactory could be gathered from the life-statistic. It was difficult to come by the exact number of displaced people who got mixed with the inhabitants of the place to which they migrated. Altogether there were about a lakh of immigrants in the Nara valley in a condition that made them easy prey to fever, dysentery and cholera when it broke out in May 1890.

The labouring classes had not much difficulty in getting work as coolies but among respectable landholder and graziers, much distress and humiliation were averted, by small advances free of interest. Yet from the figures spent on relief not much was spent in Sindh when compared with Gujerat, Deccan and Karnatak during the same period. In 1899-1900 Rs. 63,421 were spent under the famine Code and further sum of Rs. 1,400 in, the next three months. From the official figures we learn that the average number of people relieved daily during the three years 1899-1901 were 3,506 in 1899 and 235 in 1901. The total number of deaths were 36,010 souls; cattle 1,64,805; the expenditure by Government amounted to Rs. 1,35,548 and loans and charitable funds contributed Rs. 1,15,066. Agricultural relief was equally meagre like Rs. 1,60,956 as takavi; Rs. 1,16,421 as remission of takavi advances, and this included arrears of past years. No other part of Sindh was affected and the Government spent Rs. 3,562 on immigrants in Karachi. Of course there were famines before the British conquest the worst was in 1786, which was perhaps the most severe ever experienced.

When the British came Sindh was a pastoral country though not at all to the same extent as it once was Sheep and goats were in the largest number followed by the milche and plough cattle. The camels, as beasts of burden, were the least in number. Hyderabad had more milche cattle than any other district. The number worked out to 230 per thousand of the human population, a surprising proportion explained only by the export of milk products. Upper Sindh had a

higher proportion 231 and Sukkur Larkana followed with 228 and 227. Karachi had only 196, but the proportion of breeding bulls was much larger indicating that it contained one of the principal cattle breeding tracts. Thar and Parkar furnished the same index, having one breeding bull to every hundred milche kine.

In plough cattle the Sukkur, Larkana and Hyderabad districts showed 56, 54 and 53 to a square mile of occupied land but Upper Sindh with a larger portion of its area under cultivation than any of them had only 30. The plough cattle in Thar and Parkar included the camels. Hyderabad had the most goats, fewest sheep of all the districts except Sukkur. They were found in the hills with the Baluchis. Upper Sindh had 15 per square mile and Larkana 12. Goats thrive in scrub jungle and babul thickets and the Hyderabad district supported 38 to a square mile. It was also a great camel centre.

The means of transport was the ship of the desert and there was evidence that twelve centuries ago camel breeding was the occupation of a large number of people, especially in Hyderabad, Thar and Parkar and less in Larkana and Karachi. Camels were exported to Australia, but the majority of them came from Makran and Baluchistan. When the British came there was a good trade in horses from Baluchistan and Khorassan. The indigenous animals were not up to much. The defects were due to inbreeding. Yet they were a hardy race and could travel long distances. Every effort was made to improve the breed by interesting the zamindars but with little success. Mules were more preferred.

The cattle of Sindh were among the best in India. The finest milche cows were round Karachi chiefly in the hilly tracts. Most of the owners were Muslims and kept a record of the pedigree of their animals. Consequently there was a great demand for them and they were exported as far as Ceylon and Zanzibar. Thar and Parkar were also well known for their breed of cattle. Buffaloes were found in large numbers in the region of the Delta. They were good milkers. Sheep were found all over Sindh in the Western hills and Eastern desert. The milk was used and the wool spun by the shepherds. The best was exported as "Sindh wool." It was known as Nara wool. Goats outnumbered the sheep in all districts.

The vagaries of the river Indus was the economic future of Sindh Its changing moods predicted the joy and sorrow of the land. Its rise and fall like the Nile in Egypt, was the barometer of failure and prosperity of the people. This History of the seasons is the history of agriculture in Sindh. You can come across a passage like this: "The floods were not confined to the extreme north of Sindh but destroyed much property west of the Indus; down to Sehwan the country became one immense lake studded with islands where a village stood.... The floods appear to be highest on record nor did the people remember the like." Or

it could be; "The year proved to be an excellent one throughout the Province. The river rose early and continued till September with a temporary fall in July. This helped both the kharifs and rabi crops. Rainfall was also sufficient. The cultivated area increased by 40percent and the revenue by 19½ lakhs or 23 percent."

A very brief survey of the seasons in the first three decades of this century will show the rise and fall in the fortunes of agriculture according to the moods of the Indus. The year 1903-04 was, indeed, very favorable with extension in cultivation and rise in revenue. But the year following was very unfavorable. The rainfall was insufficient followed by an unprecedentedly severe frost which did the greatest damage to the crops. Cultivation fell with less revenue and heavy remissions. For the next two years the seasons were favorable. Cultivation rose by 14 percent and land revenue by 16 percent in 1905-06. In the following year 1906-07 the rainfall was copious everywhere including the desert and Kohistan in Karachi district. And the river frowned again the following year: "The year was the most unfavorable on record". The river maintained a fair level for only eleven days. Cultivation fell by 6 lakhs of acres and the total revenue by 20 lakhs. Yet conditions were much better in Thar and Parkar where the rainfall was fairly sufficient. Even though the season of 1908-09 was favorable in the Karachi district: "The high inundation combined with heavy rains produced disastrous floods which swept over almost the entire delta country, destroying cultivation and villages and causing distress to the population." In spite of this drawback the revenue rose by lakhs of rupees. The decade ended with: "the year was, on the whole, a fair one."

The decade 1911-21 began favorable except in 1912 in Karachi district where the rice cultivation of the delta was destroyed and there was considerable damage by the rise of the river in Larkana and Hyderabad. Next year the rainfall saved the situation, for the river suddenly fell in August and thereafter, except for a few days, continued fall till the end of the season. In some low lying tracts the heavy rainfall caused floods and severe damage.. Yet the area under cultivation rose to about 31 lakhs of acres and the revenue to 53 lakhs of rupees. The war years (1914-1918) were of varying fortune. There were years when rain saved the peasants; and some time the timely inundation gave a normal year. But in 1918-19 the season was of unprecedented drought and most unfavorable: "The inundation was one of the lowest on record. There was practically no rainfall. A bad kharif was succeeded by a worse rabi. "The zamindars were in distress. Quite some areas remained barren and desolate. The area under cultivation fell by 38.4 percent. This was so all over the Presidency the year was uniformly bad. The next two years were hardly any better but not so bad as 1918-19. The cotton crop suffered in 1920; and in the following year cotton, wheat and rice were only about quarter to half the average.

In the next decade ending 1931 the improved canal system gave a helping hand. The cash crops, especially cotton, received increasing facilities. And the irrigated area in 1922 increased by 125,000 acres. In 1924 we learn; "Good water-supply was, however, available both on the Jamrao and Mithrao during kharif and hence good cotton and rice crops were obtained". Cotton prices ruled high "and the cotton crop also was exceptionally-good. Both food and cash crops were receiving the advantage of an extending irrigation facilities could not defeat the vagaries of the Indus. The plans for the Barrage had already begun. In 1926 the acreage under cotton rose again by percent due to the stimulus of high prices. The ratio of irrigated area in Sindh was 74.3 percent as compared with 3.6 percent in the Presidency in 1926. Spreading irrigation was only relief but every thing depended on the Indus. In 1926 and 1927 the river again disappointed not only was the river late in rising but it failed fully a month and a half earlier than the normal period of the inundation this was for-both the years. Hence both the kharif and rabi sowing were-adversely affected. The usual curse of agriculture were nearly always there like frost, locust, grasshoppers and the plant diseases. The methods and where-with-ails to meet the last mentioned were not so well developed and advanced as they are today. Hence their inroads into agriculture were deep. Again in September 1926 a cyclonic rain caused serious damage. It destroyed houses and caused a breach in the River Protective Bund destroying 20,000 acres of kharif. Not till 1928-29 do we find a season which from the inundation point of view, was one of-the best experienced within the last decade. The river rose early and kept up its level up to October which is beyond the normal season. In spite of this the harvest was not bumper of deficiency of rain, wide-spread attack of boll-worm on cotton and severe frost in January. In the last year of the decade 1930, the Indus lay low at the beginning of the season and then suddenly rose to record the most unusual height of 63 feet at Attock and 17.3 feet at Bukkur and caused serious floods in no less than four districts. The rains and high river caused wide-spread destruction to crops, severe loss of cattle, houses and other property and a large number of people homeless.

During the five years ending 1935 the story of woes opens, in the year 1931. Breaches occurred in the river bunds and canal banks and large areas were submerged. A large number of people thereby rendered homeless. Refugee camps were organised at several places. The rabi crop was injured by frost and adverse winds. The situation was worsened by a fall in prices and. Government had to grant remission ranging from 12.1 percent to 40 percent in assessment. In the next year the story is the same low rainfall, water logging due to floods of the last two years, and slump in prices. At last; "The Lloyd Barrage Canals were opened in 1932 and began to supply water for irrigational purposes for the kharif season of the year under review. This has revolutionized nearly the whole of irrigational system of the Province, the greater portion of which was formerly

dependent on inundation canals and somewhat uncertain rains. Central Sindh was now assured of perennial water supply from the Barrage canals. "The working of the project was on the whole a great success." Hyderabad, Thar and Parkar and Sukkur reaped a rich harvest. This was a turn in tide. The slump in prices continued in non-Barrage areas but no such relief as remission was necessary in the Barrage area. The total collection of land revenue amounted to Rs. 134 28 lakhs or 96.41 percent of the net demand. Though the slump in prices continued the total net collections scaled to 142.26 lakhs or 92.01 percent. In 1935-36 it reached Rs. 169.21 lakhs or 93.76 percent. In like proportion remission and takavi scaled down to Rs. 5.58 lakhs and that was given due to the slump in prices while the takavi was Rs. 0 07 lakhs against Rs 0.16 lakhs in the preceding year. Even while Sindh was feeling the impact .of the Barrage within three years the Second World War broke out in 1939. The aftermath is the story of India's independence.

#### LAND REVENUE COLLECTION (1921-1936)

Years	Total demand lakhs of Rs.	Collection lakhs of Rs.	Percentage
1921-22	113 48	105.25	98.55
1922-23	119.62	118.57	99.11
1923-24	112.10	111.48	99.4
1924-25	120 70	120.28	99.65
1925-26	102.79		
1926-27	112.52	111.60	99.18
1927-28	98 36	97.93	99.55
1928-29	114.27	114.09	99.84
1929-30	102.35	101.93	99.58
1930-31	86.89	76.74	88.32
1931-32	106.91	98.90	92.41
1932-33	139 28	134.28	96.41
1933-34	163.11	145.43	89.16
1934-35	154.66	142.26	92.01
1935-36	172.97	162.30	93.79

Whatever the seasons, Government land revenue, seldom, or never, suffered. In spite of the Government's uncertain land policy and the progressive poverty of the zamindars the percentage of recovery of the land revenue speaks for itself. Poverty, in Sindh and elsewhere in Western India, was due to this ruthless, collection of land assessment. When the percentage of collection, was nearly always 90 percent of the demand one can well understand the remission granted. A consistent history in figures of the land revenue collection was not possible.

But even taking the scattered years, since the beginning of this century, in the seven years 1904 to 1911, the percentage of revenue collected. was in nineties and varied between 90.50 to 96 50 percent. During the first Great War ( 1914-18 ) and after, for a few years, where available, the percentage of collection touched 98.83, 98.62 and 98.25.

Perhaps the only way to surmount a high land assessment is to have a fair rise in prices of agricultural produce. But with more land under cultivation and a market glutted with crops is. a distinct disadvantage to the farmer. In an agricultural economy there are other balancing factors Good communications, a growth of urban life, possibilities of export to neighbouring markets and the development of cash crops like cotton, sugarcane, tobacco etc., are a stand-by to a fall in prices at home. But in a developing economy the agriculturist has to depend, mainly at an easy supply of water, fairly reliable and constant. Lands near a river may hope to be blessed by such facilities but what of lands that depend on the bounty of the ever fickle rain. Sindh with hardly a fair rainfall, vast acres of desert land and a river that would never be relied on to play the game one can well imagine the condition of the farmer. An agricultural history amply proves Sindh's plight and dependence on the vagaries of a river. Enough has been said.

A history of prices, like a consistent record of land revenue. in Sindh are practically impossible. But a lean review is within, our reach.<sup>61</sup> In 1903-04: the prices of grain were low throughout the Province a result natural in a year of abundant harvest... The zamindars were embarrassed by the low prices. A thrifty class of zamindars would have held on to their stock but their stocks, mostly because of debts, were with the dealers. The Administrative Report said: "The zamindar must learn to get in touch with the Central market and to arrange to hold over his surplus grain till he can dispose of it to the best advantage." The period of layout of railways to Guzerat and Punjab had already begun. But in Sindh, as elsewhere, irrigation facilities mention a spreading acreage and even with unfavorable season there was a fall in prices, there was too much to spare. But a cash crop like cotton was steadily extending in Sindh. And further developments in this direction depended on cotton prices and possibilities of

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<sup>61</sup> The earliest record of prices of agricultural produce is contained in the statements in the Sind papers presented to Parliament in 1854 showing the results of the sale of grain collected by Government as revenue during, the first five years of the British rule. The statements furnish the maximum, minimum and average rates realised per kharar and the last converted into. Probably more than one half of the grain in the market was disposed of at these sales and, communications being very imperfect, the Government held a quasi-monopoly of the trade and was in fact, as Sir George Clerk afterwards reported a "Master Banyan." Stocks were held back until prices had risen as high as they would go, or else supplied to the commisriats at arbitrary rates. The figures quoted may, therefore, be taken as much above real market values even in large towns. No comparison with rural remote villages is possible. Gazetteer p. 331.

more markets. Even cotton could not promise a heaven to the cultivator for the market could be dislocated and could cause a large loss to the farmer.

Rates per maund of 40 seers (the equivalents have been taken for the kharar, bajri and jawari 24 maunds; wheat 26 maunds; rice, jamba and rape 21 maunds) are reproduced below.

Description of grain	1844-45	1845-46	1846-47	Jan. to March	1849-50	Average
	Rs.ap	Rs.ap	Rs.ap	Rs.ap	Rs.ap	Rs.ap
Bajri	1-10-6	1-3-2	0-14-8	0-14-2	0-14-9	1-1-10
Jawari	1-11-3	0-12-3	0-12-0	0-9-10	0-11-8	0-14-7
Wheat	1-4-4	0-14-7	0-4-4	0-15-4	0-15-3	1-0-7
White rice	1-6-1	0-13-3	1-0-1	0-13-2	0-13-4	0-13-0
Redria	1-0-2	0-14-1	0-11-1	0-13-2	0-10-6	1-7-6
Jarnba	1-10-1	1-10-6	1-15-5	1-6-10	1-6-0	1-11-2
Rape	2-2-6	2-1-5	2-5-0	1-7-11	1-4-0	1-2-2
				General average		1-2-2

Take a crisis like the first World War.<sup>62</sup> In 1914-15 the prices of agricultural products except cotton were on the whole higher than in the previous year on account of the uncertain situation created by the War, and the zamindars in general made profit thereby. The price of wheat rose very high on the outbreak of the war, but fell when Government--took control of the export trade. In consequence of the closure of the enemy markets as well as those of Belgium to which Sindhi cotton was chiefly exported of cotton price fell. This affected the cultivators severely. The loss fell mostly on the zamindars. The next year 1916 price of cotton rose in response to an expected demand from Japan and other countries. The price of wheat declined, but other agricultural products remained constant in their prices which remained generally above the normal. Wheat rose again when the control was relaxed in May 1916. The general level of food-grains, the next year, was still somewhat higher than in the pre-war times. Cotton continued to attract the Japanese market. It continued to be quoted at Rs. 11 a maund. Fodder supply and the milche cattle had improved and Ghi sold at a very high rate, at 50 percent in excess of its normal price. This was due to a large demand from Mesopotamia. British contacts were capturing foreign markets and the war helped the situation.

<sup>62</sup> Prices in Seers (80 tolas) per rupee every five year beginning 1895.



Years	District	Wheat	Rice	Jawari	Bajri	Gram
		<i>Seers</i>	<i>Seers</i>	<i>Seers</i>	<i>Seers</i>	<i>Seers</i>
1895	Karachi	11	10	13	16	12
1900		11	9	10	10	10
1905		11	11	14	16	16
1910		9	10	11	12	12
1915		8	7	9	11	10
1895	Hyderabad	12	10	15	15	14
1900		10	8	10	11	10
1905		11	8	15	15	15
1910		9	8	12	14	13
1915		8	6	10	11	9
Ditto	Thar & Parkar*	12	11 1/2	13	13	8
		10	9	9	10	8
		11	11	14	..	8
		10	19	12	..	8
		8	6	9 1/2	10	7 1/2
Ditto	Upper Sind**	12	8	17	18	17
		11	9	11	12	11
		11	11	17	16	17
		9	7	13	13	13
		7	6	12	12	8
Ditto	Larkana	13	10	14	16	15
		12	12	18	12	14
		12	11	22	15	15
		9	7 1/2	13	13	13
		7	8	10	11	8 1/2
Ditto	Sukkur	Not available				
		12	9	10	12	11
		14	13	16	17	20
		11	8	14	14	16
		8	6	11	11	10
1905	Nawabshah	12	9	15	19	11
1910		8	8	12	16	12
1915		6	6	11	12	8
		* Headquarters		** Jacobabad		

The war ended (1917-18) but the prices of food grain, cotton and other necessaries rose steadily:

<i>On August 1st 1917</i>			<i>On August 1st 1918</i>	
Jawari	Rs. 3	Per maund	Rs. 5/8	Per maund
Bajri	Rs. 3	Per maund	Rs. 5/12	Per maund
Wheat	Rs. 4/12	Per maund	Rs. 5/13	Per maund
Rice	Rs 6/2	Per maund	Rs. 9/5	Per maund

The price of cotton was unprecedentedly high mainly owing to speculation, the prices being, unginmed Rs. 19/8 and ginned Rs. 65/8 compared with Rs. 9/8 and Rs. 29/5 in the preceding year. It was a year also of high inundation which prevented the import of sufficient quantities of grain to supplement local stocks. The influence of rising prices on the people will be treated later. During these years the Government land revenue demand, as previously stated, remained at about percent.

So great was the attraction for planting cotton that the price of cotton fell by 21 percent, a fact due to the heavy outturn of the crop. Following the war there was a tendency for marked rise in the price of food grains<sup>63</sup> a but Government intervention and control kept the prices more or less steady. The Government was honest and meant business very unlike the Government we have today. There was a restriction on the movement of grain, a periodical census of food grain stocks, the importation of Rangoon and Calcutta rice and of Punjab and Australian wheat and the opening of cheap grain shops ensured the fair distribution of food grains and so eliminated all possibility of actual scarcity. The distress among the poor classes of people was largely counteracted by the high wages, obtained. Considerable quantity of standard cloth was sold under control. These conditions of scarcity were attributed to short stocks of food stuffs in India and in the world generally. By 1920-21 the prices continued to by somewhat easier though the condition was apparently less satisfactory than in the Presidency. By 1922-23 favorable seasons, larger stocks, slackness of exports and bumper crops of wheat in foreign countries induced a fall in prices of food grains but they still continued to be above pre-war level. The prices of commodities such as cloth, ghi etc., continued to rule high. Cotton picked up again and next

<sup>63</sup> As it was the price of staple foods rose more than 100 percent...

Rice:— In the Presidency proper the average rise in price was about 50 percent and in Sind about 57 percent. Wheat and grain The average rise in the prices in seven typical centres in the Presidency proper was 63 percent and in three typical centres in Sind was 23 percent.

During a large part of the year gram was the cheapest grain in most places, though even with this, the rise in prices in seven typical centres in the Presidency proper was 68 percent and typical centres in Sind was 26 percent.

*Crop Report of the Bombay Presidency, 1918-19.*

year 1923-24 there was a keen demand for Indian cotton in the foreign market and the prices rose. The unfavorable season in the succeeding year damaged the kharif crop and prices registered a new high; but prices of raw cotton fell as a result of better American crop. Gradually the demand for Indian cotton in foreign markets declined. Indian cotton could not compare with either Egyptian or American.

During the next five years ending 1930 the seasons effected the prices. Cotton continued to decline because of continued fall in foreign market and the successful American crop. The prices of food grains varied from district to district as they did all along, always depending on how the seasons affected the various parts of the Province. The price of imported cloth afforded relief to the poorer orders but with consequences too well known to our cottage industry. In 1929-30 the general trade depression set in and there was a considerable fall in the prices of cereals as well as cotton. The fall though desirable from the point of view of the consumer, affected adversely, to great extent, the agricultural classes and those merchants had stored commodities in the hope that prices would rise. The world wide depression hit both the agriculturist and trader hard. Some zamindars found it difficult to dispose off their grain. Government to give assistance to the land holders gave liberal remissions we are told yet the land revenue remained unaffected in case it showed a steady rise; the intake ranged in 1931 from 92.41 percent to 93.79 percent of the revenue collection, it only fell to 89.16 percent in 1933-34 which was the lowest in the five years ending 1935. The world continued in the grip of the economic recession. The difficult situation in the world of prices appears to have worsened by the extension of cultivation as a result of the working of the Barrage canals and lack of the demand from foreign markets. In 1938 we learn that there was a slight improvement discernable by a rise in prices especially of rice and cotton. It was felt that if this turn in tide continued the condition of the zamindars would improve. Sindh was now divided into Barrage and non-Barrage areas and we learn that relief was given only in the non-Barrage areas for no such relief was considered necessary in the Barrage areas, as there had been no substantial fall in prices. How this could happen is difficult to explain because an extension of cultivation, must affect the prices everywhere.

## THREE

### PEOPLE

Sindh, once a Hindu province, was overrun by a succession of invaders since the days when Alexander marched into the plains of Multan, and proceeded on his memorable voyage down the Indus. The Sindhi may be considered as the descendant of the original Hindu population, converted to Islamism during the reign of the Beni Umayyad Chaliphs. The Native annals distinctly mentioned that Mahommed bin Kasim, the Arab general found a large and flourishing kingdom in Sindh guarded by a well appointed and efficient army. Islam had been the predominant religion from this earliest Arab conquest in the eighth century; and the tribal fragments of the invading hordes, Arab Moghal, Pathan and Baluch, with the converts, constituted three-quarters of the population of the entire Province. The province was easily conquered by the Muslim invaders, and was by them entrusted to a family of Sindhi converts, whose descendants were settled in the country. After a long series of invasions by the people from the north and east, it fell into the hands of the Talpur race of Baluchis, who governed, the province for about sixty years.

The very broad division into which the population of Sindh can be divided are the Muslims and Hindus. Let us, therefore, take the Muslim population of Sindh into consideration which was the most predominant in Sindh. The different classes naturalized in Sindh were:

- a) Sheikhs;
- b) Afghans;
- c) Baluchis;
- d) Memons
- e) Khwajas, and
- f) Slaves.

All Musalmans ought to be equal in the sight of Allah; but it was well known, there are many castes of converts, for the most part occupational, who did not inter—marry though professing the faith of Islam. At the same time, the centre of gravity of social precedence among Musalmans was to be found in descent from the Prophet, or from his relations and companions. The Sheikhs are the descendant of the Prophet's, collaterals. Hence the most respected in the Musalman community.

The caste figures for the Musalmans in the Census must be received with great caution. The majority of Indian converts to Islam had a fondness to be called Sheikhs of the Kureshi stock or even as Sayads.<sup>64</sup> Some of these Sayads are learned men, and are much respected by the people. Under the Kulhora dynasty they possessed much property, but the Talpurs, although of the same religious persuasion, rather patronized literature and the arts than wasted their property upon priests.

The Afghans or Pathans were generally found about Hyderabad and towards the North. Many of them had settled in the country for some generations. They had frequently attacked Sindh and invariably succeeded in the enterprise. The most celebrated, invasions in the latter times were those under Sirdar Madad Khan and that of Shah Sujah, who, however did not penetrate into the country much beyond Shikarpur.

The Baluchis<sup>65</sup> were a mountain tribe, which inhabited an extensive tract of wild and barren country from the Hala mountains eastward to the confines of western Persia. When the Talpur Amirs succeeded the Kulhora dynasty, members of their families and dependants settled in the country, and received rewards in land and pensions. The tenure of their jagirs was a feudal system. The chiefs were to attend his superior in time of war with as many men as they could master. The Baluchis had many clans, so numerous were they that one would fail to convey an accurate picture of the numerical extent of any one of these divisions below Baluchi. Of these tribes the Burdis were one of the most numerous; of these the Sundar Burdis had twenty two divisions or sects. No purpose could be served enter the details of the innumerable clans and tribes of the Baluchis numbered over five lakhs shown in sixteen main tribes. The unspecified were about four thousand.

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<sup>64</sup> The Syuds, or descendants of the Prophet, are generally shrewd and intelligent men, and there is no peculiarity about them, either of dress or appearance by which they can be distinguished from the wealthiest class of Musalman inhabitants. Most of them possess grants of lands, and they also derive a considerable revenue from the offerings of the pious. These imposters had formerly great influence with the rulers of the country; but they are now on the wane, the present Ameers being not so bigoted and superstitious as their predecessors. The Indus Delta.

<sup>65</sup> The Beloochees are generally fine-looking men with a fewish cast of countenance, aquiline, nose, high forehead and large expressive eyes: in stature they are somewhat above middle height and their make bespeaks more activity than muscular strength; They are rapacious, vindictive and dissolute race; and as far as I have been able to form an opinion of them appear to possess few good qualities. The soldiers have a martial appearance than most Asiatics and are undoubtedly brave.... Notes Relative to the Population of Sind. 31st December 1847.

A Baluchi had his own ideas of honour, despised cowardice and had no small share of national pride. Sometimes addicted to drink he was savage, violent and revengeful; his manners were rough; his amusements were chiefly field sports and his food coarse and to most people distasteful. He is fair in complexion, powerfully built, of hardy constitution and brave in tattle. Their dialect was very little known; it differed considerably from that of the other hill people; they had no literature except the productions of the bards and spoke to the people of the plain in the Sindhi tongue. As it was with the Europeans of the middle Ages, the Baluchi preferred the pleasures of the chase to any other; thought the training of the hawk a more enviable acquirement than reading or writing. He would rather wield the sword more effectively than acquire all sciences ever studied in Cairo and Baghdad or Bokhara. In both the physical and mental make-up the Baluchis resemble the Afghans very closely. Like the Scots, the Afghan and the Baluchi are a fierce hilly people who love their hearth and home so dearly as to lay down their lives in its defence. They are a liberty loving people. The British were faced with as difficult a problem of conquest of Baluchistan as they were with the taming of the Scot. With the Afghans they learnt a severe lesson.

Turning to the Memons and Khoagas the former were found settled in Sindh, especially in Hyderabad, Sehwan and Karachi. They were originally Kutchi Hindus, who became Muslims, and probably immigrated to Sindh during the Kulhora rule. The avocations were trade, agriculture and breeding camels; their dress was that of the Sindhis. Some of them were very learned men, and they had done more than any other class to introduce sciences into the country. The Sindhi Memon always adhered to the word of the Koran; no class of people in Sindh were more highly spoken of than the Memons. There were few Khoagas settled in Sindh According to them they came from Persia. The Khoagas believe in all Imams and continue the line up to the present day. They dressed in white, red and coloured clothes. They and their own Mukhi in Karachi, never went to the Muslim kazi to settle their religious differences. Under the Mukhi were a number of inferior officers called waris, and their probity and strictness of life were highly spoken of.

The slaves were generally domestic or household servants. A great number of Zanzibaris, Mombasis and Habshis (Abyssinians) etc., found their way to Sindh by Muscat, and other parts of Arabia. They were generally imported and sold young. All of them were known for their thievish, drunken and quarrelsome propensities. Under the native rulers they were as troublesome as the Sindhis of Kutch. They were treated as the inmates of the family and lived so comfortably that emancipation to them was rather an evil than a benefit. In some case they rose to distinction, and, as confidential servants of the princes, exercised no small

authority over their inferiors. All this class became Hanafi<sup>66</sup> Musulmans, and, generally speaking, married females of their own class. The male of one family usually took to wife the female slaves belonging to it, and did not connect themselves with the property of another master. The children of slaves were of course slaves and manumission appeared rarely practised, except for religious motives

The Hindu<sup>67</sup> portion of the community occupying Sindh were in the same social position that the Musalmans held in India. As in Arabia, Afghanistan and other portions of Central Asia the Hindus of Sindh were merely employed in trade, and in ministering to the religious wants of their fellow castemen. We, therefore, found unlike Hindu India, no outcastes as in their own country. It was quite probable that few or none of the Hindu females which were in Sindh at the time of the Muslim conquest survived the persecution to which they were subjected; and it was most likely that by degrees they were either converted to Islam, or emigrated to other lands. The present race, we are told, were almost entirely of Panjabi origin, as their features, manners, religion, ceremonies and even opinions, as well as their names sufficiently proved. But although from the country of Guru Nanak few of them were really of the Sikh persuasion, though most of them had a tendency that way. Even today in Hindu India marriage between a Sindhi and Sikh is not very uncommon. And they live very peaceably as neighbours.

As, however, they still persisted in dividing themselves into castes there were among the Hindus in Sindh:

- a) Brahmins;
- b) Kashatriyas;
- c) Vaishya;
- d) Gooroos.

Unlike in Hindu India the Brahmins of Sindh were illiterate and in poverty. Their influence on the subordinate castes had diminished and we find the premier caste in Sindh, the Lohanas, wearing the beard of the Musalman invader, and enjoyed the luxury of meat provided it was slain after the orthodox fashion of Islam. The Lohanas consisted of occupational classes like the Amils, Soucars and

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<sup>66</sup> There are four such schools: the Shaft, the Hanafi, the Malika, and the Hambalis. The Arabs of the littoral and the Konkan Musalmans of western India are Shafais. The Musalmans of Morocco and Babary and those of Sudan are Malikas. To describe a Musalmans tribe as Hanafi is an obvious abuse of the terms. Yet three of the four schools were returned as tribal names..... *Census of 1901*.

<sup>67</sup> The Hindoos are of the Lowana and Bhatia castes and do not differ from those of British India: patient, persevering and industrious they are in possession of nearly all the trade of the country and from and by far the most wealthy class in the country..... *The Indus Delta*.

Shudras The two great classes according to their several occupations were first, the Amils or Government servants and the Intellectual class and secondly, the soucars, Hathwara, Pokhwara. etc., i.e., merchants, shopkeepers (Bhaiband), agriculturists etc. Unlike the Muslim the Hindu female enjoyed more freedom and possessed a considerable share of personal beauty. The male was pushing and fond of travel went to foreign countries but left his mate, in the care of her parents and friends. Lieutenant R. F. Burton wrote in 1847: "In places where this practice is universal as for instance in Shikarpoor, it is not unusual for a husband to return home after a long sojourn in foreign lands, and his wife with a small family of her own. The offended party, however seldom allows these incidents to interfere with the domestic tie, and after inflicting a mild chastisement, thinks no more about it, and treats the fatherless off springs with a truly paternal kindness." It is not only the female who is the sinner for often the male is known to found a family abroad and deserts the female at home or at times quietens the pangs of conscience by continuing to send a small pittance to the family or a lonely wife at home.

The physical traits of the people of the Punjab were found in the Sindhis but not so pronounced, The Sindhi was taller and more robust than most of the natives of India. He was dark in complexion and tolerably strong and muscular. Of the Muslim population there are conflicting opinions among early travellers. He was regarded as an addict to bhag hence "idle, apathetic, notoriously cowardly and dishonorable, addicted to intoxication, unclean in person, and immoral in the extreme." But this said the author was due to his "collision with more hardy and valorous hill tribes who have always treated him as a serf; and by his perpetual dependency upon Hindoo shroffs and banyas, who have robbed him and impoverished him to the utmost."

As against this, Lieutenant Burton says "The people of Sindh have been also much decried; but the charge has been too indiscriminately brought forward against the whole population. The large masses of the indigenous population are particularly industrious, whether in the occupation of agriculture, or the manufactures. The merchants of Sindh are active and intelligent, well protected, though heavily taxed, by the Government; but not so much so as to prevent foreign traders to leave their native country and reside under the rule of the Ameers of Sindh. Sindh may be pronounced a country considerably advanced in civilization the Government though severe is vigilant and well ordered; too, sensible of its own interests to ruin either commerce or agriculture of the country. The people are orderly and obedient; and the laws are respected."

We may now turn to the people of the desert region. We have already referred to the Rajputs of Thar and Parkar a few more details are now necessary. The principal tribes and castes in Thar and Parkar were the Soda, Noray, Raoma,



Khosa tribes, besides some Nomadic tribes; and Bantias, Lowanas and Mehmons formed the mercantile community. There were also a great number of Bhils or Colies, though neither Hindus nor Muslims they regarded themselves as Hindus and because of numbers, especially when the British came, they exercised considerable influence in the country where they were found.<sup>68</sup>

The Sodas as we know, were the most dominant race of Rajputs defended from the Parmar Soda. These Parmars left Rajasthan about 800 years ago and settled in the neighborhoods. The Sodas conquered Omerkote and Rutta-Kote about A.D. 1226. Not content with these forts they continued to spread. They took Parkar in the 11th century and their rulers took the title of Ranas. With the coming of Islam these Rajputs distributed themselves among the not so accessible sand hills of the desert and here constituted themselves as landed proprietors acknowledging the Rana of Omerkote as their Chief. "The soda ladies of the Desert are among the most beautiful women of the East, their beauty and virtue the theme of many a song—the subject of many story, and in former days the cause of many a fatal contest."

The Raoma and Noray tribes are of Muslim origin and have landholders in the western portion of the desert. Nothing was known of their advent into the desert. Their numbers were small from 1100 to 900 when the British came. They received in marriage the daughters of the Sodas. The next in importance were the Khosa tribe. They were also Muslims and lived between Marwar and the Indus valley. They were a fine robust martial race inured to fatigue, exposure and scanty living; brave and enterprising when roused the desert was just the place for their qualities to shine. They looked to the saddle and the sword for livelihood. With the fall of the Kulhoras and Talpurs they took to the desert and eked out a living with the local Chiefs; and when chance came their way they helped themselves to others property. As marauders they levied contributions or blackmail to the gates of Bhuj in one direction to the walls of Radhanpur in another and to the vicinity of Ahmedabad in a third.

As regards the nomads, who were all Mohemmedans and indigenous, though originally from Sindh, the Oodeyas and Lunjas may be considered the principal tribes. Till the advent of the British, like all nomadic tribes, they depended on their herds for their maintenance. With the coming of security of person and property, under the British, they took to agriculture. When in pursuit of forage for their herds they now left behind their young and old at home. With security and liberal revenue arrangements they endeavored to appropriate certain localities, in their respective hamlets or thurrs. "The male of the tribe were fine athletic men; they were remarkably well behaved."

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<sup>68</sup> Capt, S. N. Raikes. Memoirs on Thar and Parkar Districts of Sind, PP. 4-9.

The next class of people are the Bhils who were again divided into tribes One tribe called the "Mays" lived along the edge of the Rann, east of Ballyari, they considered themselves, and we are told justly so, as ranking far above the Bhils of the desert generally Under the Amirs of Sindh, this tribe occupied nineteen hamlets or thurrs or watering places free of all land tax. This privilege was continued to them after the conquest of Sindh in 1844, when the heads of the tribes stipulated to give up all thieves to be answerable for all thefts traced to their hamlets and to be ready to serve Government whenever called upon to do so. The stipulations had been faithfully kept, while the general conduct of the members of the tribe, under the rule of its elders, had been excellent. The Bhils of Thar and Parkar rank very low in the social scale; they were unsocial and addicted to stealing; they are unaccustomed to peaceful pursuits or industry they hardly knew what such thing were. They wandered about the jungle living on fruits and water; they hardly acknowledged a chief and lived under his protection. Most of the crime in Thar and Parkar was traced to them but under the British it went to the credit of their chiefs that crime began to fall. The centres of trade in the desert region were very few. The market towns were the towns of Mitti, Dipla, Virawow and Nagur Parkar. The trading communities were the Mehmons of Dipla and the Brahmins of Mitti. More on the growth of trade and towns later.

The Sindhis, mostly all Muslims, no distinction of caste, properly speaking, existed among them. The Koree (weaver), *Dedh and Chamar* (those who work in leather). *Chahao* and *Bale-Shahee* (sweepers), and *Daphee* or *Shikaree* (huntsmen), however, as in all Muslim countries, were considered a low class of people. They always married into their own traders and they are especially the sweepers, never allowed to live in the villages or towns.

The condition of the lower classes of the peasantry was truly wretched unable, at times to obtain sufficient food and even clothing, it was often out of their reach to provide a home for a wife and family, hence they seldom married. The consequence of such a life may be easily imagined. They took to theft and their women to prostitution, living in a state of poverty and disease. Due to those hardships their men were woebegone and their women ugly and haggard even in youth. They were given to drinking spirit distilled from gur, smoking in excess and used bhang obtained from hemp. In such a life of misery their relief was sex. The villages abounded in dancing girls and most of the men were sunk in sensual pleasure. This may be rather an exaggerated picture, drawn by the conquerors when they came. They blamed the despotic Government of the Amirs. This can also be partly responsible for the embittered life; yet even the new Government could not wave a magic wand so as to create a new-enchanted world. In their wake came miseries, perhaps of a different order, which weighed

as heavily and poverty continued to-dog the land. Where was the difference? The rule of law and order did come in but the tyranny of the Amir was replaced by the greed of the East India Company.

Sindh naturally falls into three divisions, the Kohistan or mountainous and rocky tract which is separated from Mekranand Baluchistan, Indus valley, and the desert of Thar and Parkar which runs up through Khairpur as far as Sukkur. It was larger than Denmark and Belgium and Switzerland combined; but in point of population it was exceeded by Switzerland alone.<sup>69</sup> Density in Sindh was entirely a question of irrigation. It had an area of 46,506 square miles and its population in 1931 was only 38,87,070.<sup>70</sup> The rise in population between 1872 and 1931 was only 16,94,655. Therefore, the variation in Population since 1872 was the following:

<b>POPULATION OF SIND 1872-1931</b>	
1872	2,192,415
1881	2,417,057
1891	2,873,100
1901	3,210,910
1911	3,513,435
1921	3,279,377
1931	3,887,070

<b>CHANGES IN POPULATION OF SIND</b>	
1872 to 1881	+210,491
1881 to 1891	+485,043
1891 to 1901	+335,810
1901 to 1911	+302,525
1911 to 1921	+234,058
1921 to 1931	+607,693

A slow rise in population is marked from 1872 to 1911 in spite of the heavy toll in life during the closing years of the nineteenth century. With exception of a cholera epidemic in Karachi in 1892, like the rest of the Presidency the years 1891 to 1896 were of normal seasons. From 1896 onwards there were a succession of famines, bad seasons and plague epidemics unrivalled in the history of any other part of India. But Sindh owing to its dependence on irrigation, escaped the famine; but its chief towns, Karachi, Hyderabad and Sukkur suffered from

<sup>69</sup> Census of 1872

<sup>70</sup> Census of 1931

plague. The variation in population at the end of each decade beginning from 1872 to 1931 were the following.

The population of Sindh was sustained by agriculture like any other Province of India. The growth of towns was very slow. In the decade ending 1931 the towns had increased from 27 to 30 i.e., one town a piece in the Hyderabad (7) Karachi (6 ) and Larkana (6) Districts Karachi itself showed a steady growth like the Bombay and Ahmedabad:

POPULATION						
City	1872	1881	1891	1901	1911	1921
Bombay	644,405	773,196	821,764	776,006	979,445	1,175,914
Ahmedabad	128,505	137,041	159,366	199,609	232,777	274,007
Karachi	56,753	78,560	105,199	116,683	151,903	216,883

If we take the proportional population of each city at each succeeding census taking 1872 as hundred Karachi has the highest rate of growth over the decades.

INDEX NUMBER OF POPULATION GROWTH SINCE 1872						
<i>(1872 base year = 100)</i>						
City	1872	1881	1891	1901	1911	1921
Bombay	100	120	128	120	152	182
Ahmedabad	100	107	124	155	181	213
Karachi	100	130	185	206	268	382

The two factors that contributed to the rapid growth of Karachi were the construction of the North–Western Railways and the consequent development of the port. Besides the improvement in communications (roads) the increasing use of the river by steam-ships and contacts with the surrounding provinces. What with the opening of the Suez, increasing exports of cotton and wheat and with Karachi the only important port, next to Bombay, on the west, its growth continued to increase. Sukkur, approached from the Punjab by rail over the Indus had more than doubled its population in thirty years, and had an immigrant population of one–quarter from the Punjab and the neighbouring state of Khairpur. Even in Karachi there had been any appreciable percentage of immigrants to the ratio being as high, as 50 percent.<sup>71</sup> In the very first decade ending 1881 the population of Karachi had nearly doubled. Hyderabad in Sindh

<sup>71</sup> Migration was very large and most of these people came from Cutch Kathiawar and Baluchistan and a majority of these were labourers on rice fields in the coast talukas and also at Karachi. Hyderabad furnished the next largest contingent which consisted of men in Government services or business. Gazetteers, 1919. pp. 8-9.

is another city of importance and showed a fair increase in population practically in each decade. Sometimes about 78 percent since 1872. Some of these cities grew over the years but their numbers continued to be very small, as previously mentioned there were only thirty by 1931.

In the Upper Sindh frontier the proportion of the population concentrated in perhaps, the only town worth mentioning Jacobabad was only 4 percent and even that declined with the removal of the garrison. The population of the town and cantonments together at any time was not more than 11,361. Larkana was the most densely populated district in Sindh and also the most fertile. Yet only five percent of the population was in the towns. Larkana the most important with a population of about 17,723. The others insufficient. It received immigrants from Baluchistan and Rajputana as labour and artisan and traders from the Punjab. Sukkur had a population of 42,759 in 1931 but Shikarpur stood first with 55,503 souls and Rohri not worth mentioning (11,378 souls). With the exception of Karachi and perhaps Hyderabad the remaining towns are hardly worth a mention.

Several generations of misrule and oppression had desolated the desert country. But it recovered rapidly and its population in 1872 was four and a half times what it was in 1856 and in the succeeding 39 years it increased by nearly 90 percent.<sup>72</sup> In spite of the famine the census of 1901 that was preceded by famine still showed a slight rise of 2 percent. But thereafter in the succeeding decades there was a normal rise in its population.

The district continued to be sparsely populated. Over its enormous area of nearly 14,000 square miles the population was only 32 per square mile. Only 2 percent

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<sup>72</sup> It is difficult to account with precision for such a rapid addition to the population of a desert district still as the subject is an important one, and one of the criterions of the prosperity and happiness of a people, it is deserving of notice. I do not, however, wish to place too much stress on any particular cause, for I hold the increase to be attributable to various, causes, which are known to influence the social progress of society. The following remarks will at the some time satisfactorily account for a, considerable augmentation of the population.

1) Some of the population that had left under the Amirs from Thar and Parkar have returned from the Kutch and some from Cheelar district in Omerkote.

2) Security of person and property, abolition of custom duties, light and assessment, cheapening of the necessaries of life and peaceful occupation have all increased population who have no necessity to emigrate.

Settled ways of life, peace and security have always tended to increase in population. To me this is the result of the British rule. This State of society at present was so favorable to the increase that not till some adverse causes come into play will decrease or retard the growth of the population. If this increase continues, the population of Thurr and Parkar will double itself in 20 years. That of England is doubling itself in 52 years; Prussia 26; Austria 69; France 105.

( S. N. Raikes ).

lived in towns of Mirpur Khas and Umarmkot. The former over the decades doubled its population and now a considerable railway junction would it was expected, improve and increase its population. Umarmkot, the former headquarters of the district, was losing in population. The town was at a distance from the railway and the general flow of trade. The thickest rural population was found in Mirpur Khas and Digri talukas i.e., in the Jamrao tract where there were 100 to 97 persons respectively to the square mile. Migration had continually fallen. The bulk of the emigrants came from Rajputana and Punjab. The Punjabis came and settled down for good in the canal region.

The Nawabshah District came into existence after 1911. The increase in population was due to the extension of the Nasrat canal and the opening of the Jamrao canal and the colonisation of the areas commanded by them. The district became one of the most populous as it was one of the most fertile in Sindh. It contained only one municipal town Tendo Adam with a population of 10,013. The whole population may, therefore, be regarded as rural. Its density to a square mile was 116 which was short of 128 for Larkana, a district on the opposite bank of the Indus. Since the formation of this district Shandadpur was converted into a municipal town. There were no figures concerning emigration. This was due to a lack of towns and also lack of communications eastward through the desert.

Till the end of our story the towns and villages were unequally distributed. Hyderabad, Karachi and Larkana in 1931 covered an area of 20,581 square miles with 19 towns and 2,363 villages with a total population of 20,06,899 souls. In the remaining districts of Sukkur, Nawabshah, Thar and Parkar and Upper Sindh Frontier the area in square miles was 25,797 and the towns were only 11 while the villages were 2,787 and the total population of the districts stood at 18,80,171. This clearly illustrates the proportion of the towns to the villages. Urban life was negligible. Another important factor about the towns was a fall in their population in the decade 1911 to 1921 due to famine and migration; Kohistan Mahal in Karachi district was partially deserted. Actually Kohistan was inhabited by semi-nomadic graziers whose usual residence was a few stone huts. Unlike England or any other European country Sindh could offer no attraction in its towns as music halls, or the glamour and glare of gaiety pursued by large gathering of people. To the contrary, besides this lack of attraction, was the fear of terrors of plague that time and again held possession of the cities. Yet in cities like Karachi and Hyderabad the increase in population was an indication of their prosperity however marred by temporary checks due to epidemic disease.

In closing it may be mentioned that the Deccan and Sindh together made up 80.99 percent of the total area of the Presidency (exclusive of the Karnatak)

leaving a fifth to be divided between Koknan and Guzerat. In point of size, Thar and Parkar was the largest district with an area of 13,636 square miles and a population of 4,68,040 but only an average of about 14 persons per mile. Karachi with an area of 11,107 square miles, population of 6,50,240 with an average density of 30 persons to a mile stood next. Larkana was the most densely populated with 6,93,735 with only 5,057 square mile and Sukkur stood next with 5,608 square miles with a population of 6,23,779. Hyderabad with 4,417 square miles had a population of 6,62,924. Nawabshah with 4 lakhs and a thousand square miles and Sindh Frontier stood last with 2 lakhs and 2 thousand square miles.<sup>73</sup> Larkana had a density of 128 exclusive of the town of Larkana; Sukkur had 97 per mile and Nawabshah came with 116 per square mile. Sindh Frontier with the least in square miles was fairly populous having nearly 100 to a square mile. If the town of Jacobabad were excluded the density would fall to 97 per square mile.

The Sindhi dialect is a language perfectly distinct from any spoken in India. It was used with many varieties from the northern Kaithawar as far north as Bhawalpur and extended from the west to the desert which separated Sindh from the eastern portion of the Indian peninsula. Its grammatical structure was heterogeneous, the noun and its branches belonging to Sanskrit, whereas the verb and adverb are formed apparently, upon the Persian model.<sup>74</sup> The dialect abounds in Arabic<sup>75</sup> words.

Sindh had three main languages – Sindhi, Siraiki and Baluchi. Kachi was not so important; it was largely a language of temporary immigrants and it belonged to another part of the Bombay Presidency. Siraiki is really Punjabi. The proportion of the people who spoke Punjabi and Baluchi was fairly large. Of the Sindhi spoken in Sindh proper, which excluded Kohistan and the Desert there were three divisions, Upper, Middle and Lower Sindhi. The points of difference were really few and were only striking because they occurred in very common words and letters.

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<sup>73</sup> Census of 1931.

<sup>74</sup> R. F. Burton. *Custom, Language and Literature*, 1847: - A further instance of the effect of position of language is a way in which Sindhi approximates to the Persian group not merely in borrowed words, but in the essential parts of the language. At the same time words borrowed from Persian have found a most congenial soil in Sind; as Sir Richard Burton remarked, it is often the common people who use the Persian word while the corresponding Sindhi word is used only by the learned. There is probably no other part of India where Persian sounds such as 'kr' and 'gh' are so correctly pronounced by uneducated Muhammadans.  
*Census of 1911.*

<sup>75</sup> Arabic words, which contrary to the usual rule in India and Central Asia, constitute the common not the learned name of things as *jabal* a hill *basal* an onion etc., are often occurring in Sind.

*R. F. Burton: Custom, Language and Literature, 1847.*

Except in the neighbourhood of Kutch and in the Desert the language was remarkably homogeneous. Philologists said that it was literature and education that prevented variation in language. Sindh had little education and practically no literature. Lower Sindhi was spoken on the Thar side and it spread far north. In Kohistan they spoke a dialect called Lasi, the home of which was Karachi, and it had spread to the northern border of Upper Sindh. The tribes spoke a number of dialects. Kohistan was not regarded as Sindh, but Lasi was certainly Sindhi.

The Sindhi of the Hindus differed from that of the Musalmans somewhat as Hindi from Urdu. The ordinary Hindu used fewer Persian and Arabic words and if they did they pronounced, them rather badly. But more educated Hindu spoke in practically the same way as the educated Musalman of their neighbourhood. It was noticeable, however, that the educated Hindu in the north spoke the Middle Sindhi of Sehwan. The standard Sindhi was probably that of Middle Sindh spoken in and round Hyderabad.

Siraiki was Western Punjabi and nothing else. It was entirely distinct from Sindhi. It was not even an outside dialect of western Punjabi, but was the identical language spoken in Dera Ghazi and Bhawalpur. Its proper name was jatki. Siraiki was merely the Sindhi name for it, meaning the language of the Sirais or "men from up river." It was the language of all camel men, (commonly called jats) in Upper and Middle Sindh of the Talpur royal family, the Baluchi immigrants and of a large number of zamindars and peasants throughout Upper Sindh. It extended into Baluchistan as far as Sibi. Its vocabulary was always very like it in districts remote from the Punjab.

Baluchi had many variations, but these depended on the taste and fancy of the individual rather than the tribe. There were two distinct dialects within the limits of Sindh, Northern Baluchi and, Makrani. Northern Baluchi was a sub dialect which approached Makrani and was spoken by other northern tribes. Baluchi originated in Makran and was spoken with a Hindu – Sindhi accent. Gradually it was corrupted with jatki words and slowly further corruption set in with both jatki and Sindhi languages. A very small percentage spoke Guzerati, Kachi and Rajasthani for immigrants from these surrounding regions entered Sindh easily.

<b>LANGUAGES -1931</b>	
Sindhi	2 6,68,079
Baluchi	2,87,084
Siraiki or Jatki	2,43,353
Rajasthani	1,31,467
Kachi	1,03,636
Guzerat	78,399



For a very long time the only literature known in Sindh was religious and poetical, the former being translations of Arabic works on divinity, moral tales, etc., the latter being popular traditions of the country cast into rude verse and songs by the bards. The Baluchis, we are told were totally ignorant and could not boast of any writings. In almost all cases the books were written by Sindhi Musalmans and were in Arabic character called the Naskhi. These works were generally speaking, difficult and barely intelligible even to educated Hindus and were little heard of by Europeans. The Hindus wrote but in a totally different alphabet. The only branch of learning valued or cultivated by the Sindhis was Arabic. Seldom they attempted Persian, to which most of them were strangers.

Instruction was gratis and the course of study lasted from fifteen to twenty years. The students begin with Arabic grammar and syntax; then proceeded with logic (mankit), and read two or five elementary works; next came rhetoric (maani-bayan) in which they read a couple of books. The students were then considered as sufficiently learned to study the Koran, with its different commentaries (tapsie). The traditional sayings of the Prophet (hadees) and other branches of education, *viz.*, theology, astrology, alchemy, mathematics, geometry, magic etc., were occasionally studied. Females of the highest rank were taught to read (though not to understand the Koran), and were instructed in different religious works translated into Sindhi; but they did not know to write. This education continued to be popular even after the British came. But like all vernacular learning, quite a good bit of this education, lost its keenness over the years. Schools multiplied but learning for the love of it was gradually lost. All that remained was reading, writing and arithmetic. The love of English never caught fire; in Karachi in a population of 6 lakhs only 26 thousand knew English; while in the teeming lakhs in the rest Sindh only 12,346 were considered literate in English in 1931. As elsewhere in India the disparity among the literate and illiterate was simply astounding.

LITERACY 1931				
District	Total	Population		Literate in English
		Literate	Illiterate	
	Persons	Persons	Persons	Persons
Karachi	650,240	69,578	580,662	26,424
Hyderabad	659,604	38,757	620,847	6,890
Larkana	693,735	28,218	665,517	2,300
Nawabshah	496,612	23,123	473,489	2,159
Sukkur	623,779	46,197	577,582	6,035
Thar & Parkar	468,040	16,009	452,031	1,417
Sind Frontier	291,740	6,919	284,821	436

The percentage of education among the males was 6.80 and females 2.95 per 1000. Among the districts Karachi stood first and Upper Sindh last. The number of literates and otherwise among the Hindus and Musalmans was the following:

LITERACY BY RELIGION, 1931			
Total	Literate	Illiterate	Literate in English
HINDUS			
10,15,224	1,48,060	8,67,165	27,731
MUSALMANS			
28,20,800	65,430	27,65,370	7,551
623,779	46,197	577,582	6,035

The total number of people who could read and write in Sindh in 1872 were 85,316 and by 1931 had risen to only 2,28,802 the lowest in the Presidency throughout the decades. Those who actually went to schools was about 22 percent of the total population. In Upper Sindh there was hardly any instruction.

A study of the Census reports on Sindh shows that unlike any other parts of the Presidency migration plays quite an important part in the rise and fall in the population of Sindh. As the principal locality in which permanent immigration was taking place, Sindh took the bulk of the immigrants from Punjab, Baluchistan, Rajputana and Guzerat. It is worth noting that the number of foreign born, if we can use that word, increased by nearly 22 percent in the census report of 1901. Punjab and Baluchistan were the homes of many of these immigrants. In 1891 they numbered 56,000 from Baluchistan and 25,000 from the Punjab in only three districts of Karachi, Shikarpur and Upper Sindh Frontier. In 1901 the numbers increased to 62,000 from Baluchistan and again 25,000 from the Punjab.

With regard to the alleged inflow of famine refugees from Rajputana, the statistic showed that, while in 1891 there were only 34,000 immigrants from this country in the two districts mostly favored by them, *viz.*, Hyderabad and Thar and Parkar the total increased to over 50,000 in the same district by 1901 and quite a few were also found in Shikarpur district. This made relief work most necessary in Thar and Parkar which felt no need of relief so far. With ravages of famine and plague suffered by the population at the turn of the century, it was difficult to build conclusions on the fluctuations which occurred in the relative proportions of the immigrants and the people at home. Such a calamity made Sindh a temporary home for men from Guzerate specially neighbouring Kutch. The languages spoken and the dialects are a proof that not only in time of stress that

neighbouring people looked on Sindh as a home but some proportion of this in-flow continued to stay over.

A decade later in 1911 in the Upper Sindh Frontier Baluchi immigrants increased from 26,000 to 29,000 while the Punjabis dropped from seven to four thousand. The Census felt that as this district bordered on both Baluchistan and the Punjab a certain number of the new comers must be casual visitant though judged by the proportion of women the Baluchis were firmly established as permanent settlers, while the Punjabi was periodical visitor. Shikarpur was broken into the two districts of Sukkur and Larkana. In both these districts immigrants came from Baluchistan and the Punjab i.e., Punjabis into Sukkur and Baluchis in Larkana while Rajasthan sent 7,000 immigrants to Sukkur. The settlement on the Jamrao canal in Thar and Parkar district combined with the return to their homes of the famine refugees of 1901 heavily reduced the number of persons in that district. Immigration of persons to Hyderabad from Kutch which was abnormal in 1901 owing to famine dropped back to slightly below the figures of 1891. For immigrants from outside the Province the desert region drew most from Rajaputana.

This brief survey between 1891 to 1911 gives the reader an idea of the immigration in Sindh. Such an in-flow and out-flow was experienced in small proportions elsewhere also but never in the proportions as in Sindh. The effect on culture, language and society in general was greatest in Sindh than in any other part of the Presidency. In case no where else, in spite of a crisis like famine or any other calamity, were people easily persuaded to leave their homes and seek shelter in a neighbouring country. Even in the havoc wrought by an unprecedented famine like that of 1901 people in the Bombay Presidency died in their homes than escape by flight. But the Sindhi and his country welcome immigrants and as a people are ever willing to visit other lands. Even today the Sindhi is found in nearly every nook and corner of the world. He is attracted more to business than intellectual activity and it is in the latter capacity that he becomes a citizen of the world.

The majority that remained at home was bound to the earth and like the teeming millions of India were agriculturist and remained so till the end of the British rule. Industries were cottage born as all over the Bombay Presidency. They worked in leather, wood, straw, metals etc. in small proportion less than ten percent of the population. And even a lesser proportion was given to public administration and liberal arts.

Taking the total adult males, the percentage of agriculturists and non agriculturists was 63.44 to 36.56 in Sindh in 1872.<sup>76</sup> The commercial world absorbed 58,271; among other activities pottery consumed 3,413 the largest, we were told, in the Presidency; cotton spinners and weavers 5,483 of which 2,327 were in Hyderabad; persons employed in other activities numbered 51,536.

### OCCUPATION 1931

Agriculture	18,95,652
Industry	3,42,156
Others	6,07,655
Commerce	3,78,696
Professions	55,218

A detailed analysis showed Larkana with the highest number of agriculturists (4,06,633) and then came Hyderabad (3,25,352). Larkana was the most fertile district in Sindh. In industry Hyderabad (71,711) came first with Karachi (65,650) as second and Sukkur (64,933) a close third. In commerce, as expected 98,554 were engaged in Karachi and in Sukkur 73,669. While in profession Sukkur had 13,916 and Karachi came next with 12,846. In activities, other than those already mentioned, Karachi had 1,66,797, Hyderabad 1,11,663 with 96,533 in Sukkur. If other figures could be considered of any value 50,803 were engaged in toilet, tailoring, boots and shoes etc.; whilst ceramics, pottery etc., engaged 28,918; wood work carpentry etc. employed 28,288 and workers in metal were 10,353. And those who worked in metals and leather are not even worth considering.

It is quite possible that some of these industries were of importance under the Amirs and may have gradually fallen on evil days under the British. But they could never have attracted large numbers and the basis of all economy remained agriculture. Commerce and industry vied with one another down the years and perhaps commerce may have gained in pace but could never override agriculture. With the East India Company the export of raw materials *viz.*, cotton would definitely weigh more than any manufactures. And the growth and development of ports and other trade facilities that followed were prompted by the anxiety to convert India into a large market for British goods. The facts, oft repeated, are too well known. Industry is perhaps too big a word in its contents, the better and more appropriate word would be handicrafts for Indian manufacture. The Census figures for handicrafts workers probably tend to exaggerate the importance of handicrafts, for they did not or seldom referred to full-time workers who chose this means of making a living and followed it to the

<sup>76</sup> Tenants 4,18,788; Proprietors 42,966 and Farm Laboures 5,771. Engaged with animals 50,547. Percentage engaged in agriculture 90.19 and percentage engaged in animals 9.81. Others 5.77 percent. Census 1872 p. 171

exclusion of all others. The figures most probably referred to part-time workers who supplemented their meager income by carrying on village crafts particularly during the period that preceded the harvest.

The spread of irrigation, railways and roads was perhaps an attraction to the immigrants, which the neighbouring regions contributed. But this in-flow of people was only periodical. The Census of 1931 shows only 32,490, indeed, a small figure, as those employed by transport. These were then the permanent workers on water (5,179), road (1,434) and rail (12,968). What really gave constant employment, over long periods of time, must have been the canals. A programme of a network of canals in Sindh was a constant source for the supply of labour. And especially so after 1923 when the Sukkur Barrage scheme was put into execution. More on this when we turn to the problems of labour and wages. The one and perhaps only source of constant employment was the over burdened land all others were supplementary to it. Commerce meant raw materials, industry to supplement the poor earnings from land, the most important source were the life giving waters of the canals to irrigate the land and road and rail to lead to markets for the disposal of the fruits of the land. All activities converged on land and land was the mainstay of all activity.

It was generally admitted the peasant in Sindh appeared happy and easy – going, not to say rather indolent. Their condition was worst in the coastal region where a malarious climate and uncertainties of agriculture depended on floods continually depressed them. We have already described the physical condition of the people of the coast talukas. On the other hand the peasants of Upper Sindh, where most of the irrigation was by flow were much better off. And the people of the desert are already amply described. They were a hardy race of Rajputs given to a nomadic life; with national characteristic too well known in our history.

Under British the condition of the indigenous farm laborers had improved. His way of living had changed little except he ate better food and wore warmer clothes but his means of livelihood were precarious, yet an increase demand for labour had made him more independent. The extension of peasant proprietorship which had grown by the revised land settlement had opened the door of ambition of which the industrious and frugal, could freely take advantage.

The non-agricultural classes in large towns showed every sign of prosperity. The whole standard of living had risen especially among the Amil from whom the Government officials and business executive were drawn. A love of good living and European forms of comfort leading to expensive habits affected especially the young and fashionable. The Sindhi, though at times vulgar, in his ways, loves good living and is very fond of drawing attention. The educated among them

can compare with the best in any society with an added advantage of having travelled far and wide. Business probity among the mercantile-class is rather low. And are given to ways and means of becoming rich rather in a very questionable manner. But this was very common with most of the commercial classes all over our country. The Sindhi need not, in fairness, be singled out. The expectation of a young Amil as regards salary were much higher than those of a Brahmin of similar attainments elsewhere.

These riches and good living were the preserve of only the few, the majority of the cultivating classes were in debts and lived in poverty. In Sindh the peasants were attached to a land-lord, who was debarred by the tenets of his religion from taking an interest on the capital loaned yet he helped the poor; and those of them attached to well-to-do zamindars enjoyed the advantage all the more. It was the practice of the zamindar to maintain his *haris* during the working season and make up at the *Batai*. Those who went to the Bania paid an interest from 18 to 36 percent besides other exactions. From an inquiry conducted in the Nara valley it was found that of the 1,774 men employed in 67 holding there were 811 obliged to borrow from the Bania. In other parts the proportion of *haris* able to live without loans were fewer.

The position of the zamindars under the British had worsened.<sup>77</sup> He had lost his authority and feudal powers as was expected under the British who encouraged the bumble tillers, not out of feeling for them, as to introduce their policy of divide and rule. But at the same time it was no part of British policy to reduce the zamindars to insolvency or part them from their ancestral estate. This was the immediate effect of the British rule. In spite of having weakened the zamindar he was still the "Lord of the Manor." Smaller zamindars and peasant proprietors existed but they acknowledged the rights of the chief lord by payment of *lapo*<sup>78</sup>. This was perhaps the only arrangement in an agricultural economy and in a country in which cultivation depended on irrigation involving large capital and organised labour. Both the zamindar and labourers were Muslims. The Hindu in Sindh were not an agricultural class nor could the Hindu be a landlord under the Mirs. So that both labour and landlord looked to the Bania for loans and the

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<sup>77</sup> Sind is almost equally unhappy circumstanced with the Presidency proper. A series of unfavorable seasons and calamities has forced the zaminadars of many districts into the hands of the money-lenders, who exact a high rate of interest, and with the aid of the Courts deprive them of their lands. Extravagance no doubt has assisted the fall of this Mohemmedan gentry; still Government cannot but look with solicitude on the ruin of the heads of society in a frontier country, conquered but 31 years ago, who have hitherto been conspicuous for their loyalty and good behavior. The greater Sind jagirdars are also, but with a few exceptions, deeply encumbered with debt. Enquiries on this subject have been in progress for some time, and it is hoped that before very long proposals for their relief will be submitted to the Supreme Government.

<sup>78</sup> Derived from *lap* a handful. It meant the two handful of grain or anything else.

Bania fleeced them of as much produce of the land as possible but showed no desire for the land itself.

But the introduction of the British courts in 1866 in the words of Mr. Mountford: "the facilities offered by the Civil Courts for recovery of debt, the enforced sale of land in execution of a decree, the value land had acquired owing to security of tenure, the admirable opportunities that the Civil law afforded to the stronger intellect for cheating and deluding the weaker intellect, stimulated the money lender to advance far in excess of what had been his former limit *viz.*, the surplus of the zamindar's crop. The introduction in the preceding year of the unfortunate diffused settlement cruelly assisted him. Under it the zamindar had to pay assessment on all land that he claimed, though the greater part of it might be unirrigated and incapable of yielding any return. Averse to part with his paternal estate he mortgaged the good to pay the Government demand on the bad and found the Bania only too willing to accommodate him. The matter ended with the transfer of both the good and the bad lands to the Bania who kept the good and gave away the bad.

This led to the ruin of most of the hereditary land lords and called forth some action from the stand point of justice and policy. This ruin was attributed to extravagance, but this was far from the whole truth. They were hospitable and generous to a degree but personal extravagance was an exception and not the rule. From inquiries by district officials in 1896 Sir E. James deduced the following: Extravagant 23 percent; prudent but in debt for reasons beyond their control 59 percent; well-to-do 18 percent. In Upper Sindh among the Baluchis there were only 15 under the first head but 75 under the second, while in Thar and Parkar, where the zamindars are Soda Rajputs, there were 50 percent under the first head. The old zamindars were admittedly generous towards their tenants. Of the Hindus who transplanted them: "A small portion are good and tolerant landlords, wanting however the power and influence over the actual cultivators possessed by their Mohammedan neighbours. The majority are mere rack-renters." The small proportion consists no doubt of men of better class who have bought land as an investment, and the majority of village Bantias

In 1876 the first Sindh Encumbered Estate Act was passed with the view of saving zamindars paying more than Rs. 300 assessment per annum who were hopelessly encumbered. It remained open to applicants for only six months and the Bantias did their best to dissuade zamindars from the humiliation of seeking its protection and though Act XX of 1881 gave another opportunity for six months only 477 estates were taken charge of and the ruin was scarcely checked. In 1896 Sir E. James submitted a very full report to Government, on the whole subject, in which the following significant facts were disclosed:

1. More than 42 percent of arable land in the Province was owned or held in beneficiary possession under mortgage by Hindus.
2. For every acre taken by a Hindu from Government about 3 acres were bought from Musalmans.
3. During the preceding seven years the land parted with by sale or by mortgage with possession to Hindus amounted to more than 22 percent of the whole occupied area some of this was probably the same land mortgaged twice over.

In the same year the second Sindh Encumbered Estate Act (XX of 1896) was passed and a full time, manager was appointed in April 1897. This Act was also only applicable to estates paying Rs. 300 a year or more as assessment. Up to the end of 1904-05 the number of estates admitted to the protection of it was 712. Of these 168 were returned to their owners in a solvent condition. The aggregate claims against these estates amounted to Rs 45,57,566, of which Rs. 32,70,785 were admitted by the landholders. The majority of estates under liquidation were leased but some were departmentally managed. The manager was directly under the Commissioner in Sindh and had under him an Assistant and two Deputies. These appointments had been filled by Mukhtyarkars. The cost of this subordinate establishment was a charge against the estate under management and so were the amounts allowed for maintenance to the owner of the estates. The Act of 1896 was amended in some particulars by Act 11 of 1906.

Two other enactments, the Agriculturists and Land Improvement Loans Act of 1884 and 1883 respectively, had greatly assisted the landholders especially since the Deccan Agriculturists Relief Act was brought into force in Sindh in 1901. The effect of the last Act had destroyed the credit of the Agriculturist and, curiously enough, of the Bania also, for he generally owns land now and was ready to take advantage of his position as an agriculturist against the larger capitalist from whom he borrowed to carry on his business. The consequent difficulty of obtaining money was maintained by some to have done much injury to agriculture and it might well have had the effect without the Loans Acts. The combined effect of them in restraining both extortion and extravagance and relieving the difficulties of the poorer zamindars appeared to be beyond question. In Thar and Parkar the loans depended on rain and very little improvement was possible hence not much advantage of the Land Improvement Act could be taken. The condition of the zamindars had also improved with education and general enlightenment. Many of the large estates were well managed and free from debt; but indebtedness, in a greater or less degree, was, and continued to be, the normal condition of the petty landholders.



Though a greater part of the population lived on borrowed money, money lending was not a profession by itself. The rural Bania was first a shopkeeper and then a moneylender and he continued to make the one business auxiliary to the other. He advanced to the cultivator everything he required on condition, that the cultivator parted with his crops to no one but the Bania. As a seller his rates were high and he charged on all credit transactions, but as a buyer they were very low and he demanded discount on his purchase. So he took parings from every transactions and it was impossible to calculate what the poor cultivator really paid for his assistance. The normal rate of interest was either one pica per rupee per mensem = 18 percent per annum; or 23 percent for the season; or took 2 pice per rupee permensem which was 36 percent per annum.

Much higher rates were demanded in some cases and had been, allowed by Civil Courts, and though the Deccan Agriculturists. Relief Act had compelled the Bania to reduce his ostensible interest on mortgage transactions to 12 percent, he had little difficult in evading the restrictions in effect. His accounts were kept in a manner that almost eluded audit and in a language which neither his debtors, nor the judges of the Civil Courts, could read; he was free to practice many devices whereby debts were swollen, and credit shrank. The extent and variety of these practices revealed by enquiries first held under the Encumbered Estates. Act was appalling.

All this be noted was applicable only to the petty rural, Banias and not to all of them; "the absolute integrity of the great Banias of Shikarpur and Karachi has been proverbial." At the turn of the century the prevailing rate of interest in transactions between dealers was 6 percent. Private persons borrowing money on the security of house and other property paid from 9 to 12 percent. Excepting in the town of Karachi, where much business was done, there was scarcely any banking in the ordinary sense of the term (1907). Musalmans would have nothing to do with usury as a rule, and the Hindu merchant who required more capital than he had of his own, received deposits, repayable on demand, at from 3 to 6 percent. Remittances and exchange were usually branches of the business of merchants and commercial agents. These were before banking stepped in and the financial world of big business saw the light of a new day. The rural landscape remained unchanged. For here, the major transactions depended on gold and silver ornaments, or at times household effects. The Bania's home was a curiosity shop. He continued to be the poor man's salvation for where could he go in his hour of need. The much maligned village Sowcar had a distinct place in the agricultural economy of the country even after the introduction of the

cooperative movement. The village Bania and the ryot were inter-dependent for each understood the importance of the other.<sup>79</sup>

The British tried to meet the deteriorating situation in Sindh by a series of Acts to stem the tide of a rapidly spreading poverty both among the rich and poor alike. Sindh knew no agricultural prosperity than many parts of Western India. In the latter a disgruntled peasantry wreaked its vengeance on the village Bania in riots which saw an end by the Deccan Agriculturists Relief Act and which spread to Sindh by the end of the nineteenth century. The zamindar equally impoverished as his tenant struggled to keep his head above the tide. The uncertain British land policy, already referred to, had wrought havoc and now the money – lender and the Civil Court had completed his ruin. The Sindh Encumbered Estate Acts, the Land Improvements Act, the Loans Act and the Deccan Agriculturists' Relief Act were mere palliatives to keep the sinking patient alive. Human suffering is not entirely due to external forces character goes a long way in moulding our destiny. The Muslim zamindars, a easy going and pleasure loving people, often burnt their candles at both ends and became inadvertently the makers of their misfortune.<sup>80</sup>

Living is an art not only with the individual but with an entire people. At no time are the British more than vindicated than, today after twenty five years of Indian independence. It was easy to blame the British for all our woes and today we feel lost when we have only ourselves to blame. There is not the least doubt that the British left this country in economic ruin but when given the chance we have proved equally unworthy of the salt. For what have we done? But all this is besides the point. For we are now to consider what happened in Sindh, especially after 1890, when all Acts were promulgated to stem the rot.

Reports poured in and momentarily it was felt that the Deccan Agriculturists' Relief Act had curbed the greed of the moneylender and lifted a great burden off the shoulder of the ryot. A glimmer of hope spread a faint light. Mixed reports had different stories to tell. The zamindar had become more self reliant and thrifty or he still sought the company of the Sowcar or the relations of the ryot

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<sup>79</sup> The disturbance in the relation between the Bania and the zamindar appears to be slight and temporary, however and things will no doubt find their true level by and by as the Bania is absolutely indispensable in the present stage of Indian society, it being impossible for Government to take his place. Land Revenue Administration Report Part II Thar and Parkar Districts S. N. Bharucha, Deputy Collector, Nara Valley.

<sup>80</sup> If the bigger zamindars in Sind were only men of business their profits would be very large indeed. Unfortunately they are most of them incapable of looking ahead and are content to allow Hindu money-lenders to finance them provided they have sufficient money to supply their wants, and in some cases their luxuries, the majority of larger Mohemmedan zamindars care very little whether the price realized by the produce of their land is or is not the best obtainable in the market. E. L. Sale Esq., Collector, Larkana District, 1904-05.

and the village Bania were far less cordial, the demand for the takavi had risen and so on. For example in the Administrative Report 1903-04.

*“The Deccan Agriculturists Act has tended to increase the demand for takavi. Yet most of the ryots still go to the moneylender. There is reason to believe that the zamindars are today far more independent and continue to get the advances in spite of the Act. Today the zamindar has learnt to manage his affairs with less expenditure and more prudence. The Commissioner believed that the zamindar had learnt to live within his income or little beyond it. But the important lesson to save and to be thrifty was still to be learnt.”*

A Collector refused to believe that because of the Act the Bania refused to make any advance to the zamindar. It was an argument the zamindar invariably advanced when he wished to withhold the payment of land revenue or takavi or protest against the Bania's rapacity by dwelling on the advance received from the Bania on the crops in advance. Another wrote to say that the Act had ruined the Bania. The aim had been to maintain a balance in monetary transaction; and the present was an age of transition; it was an instructive one. It taught useful lessons to both the Hindus and Mohemmedans. The latter had lost a good portion of his credit in the market. But in return had become thrifty. Lavish living was given up, concubines, polygamy and sports, common in former time, were now few and far between, and he was now training himself to lead an honest, moral and economical life. The Hindu, on the other hand, had lost his lucrative occupation of usurer and learnt to be moderate in his demand of the rate of interest and to resort to other means of earning a livelihood. The existing situation was very satisfactory. The pecuniary transactions were now brought to a standard of moderation. A sort of magic wand was waved over his district.

Mr. Bredon, wrote from Hyderabad; “Not only had the number of mortgages between agriculturists and moneylenders declined by 70 percent since the application of the Act, but sales had fallen off by more than 17 percent. With a few more good harvests, the zamindar would be a free man. The zamindar had learnt to meet with his needs from his own resources.” In Sukkur the restriction imposed by the Act was almost wholly beneficial; and to Mr. Rieu in Larkana, besides, the Act, and more liberal attitude by Government the zamindar would soon be independent of the Bania. It was also felt that with experience and education the zamindar would become an expert in managing his affairs. The only voice of wisdom, in this world of great expectations, was from Mr. Bharucha in Thar and Parkar who regarded the whole affair as slight and temporary for he firmly believed that the Bania and the ryot were so closely bound by mutual interest that there could never be a parting of ways between the two. The Government nor its acts would ever replace the village Bania in the economy of the country.

The voice of moderation spoke that though there was a marked improvement in the last 20 years there was not in Sukkur, Larkana or Naushahro Abro "one rich man either in the station of the zamindar or cultivator; and very few, if any, were able to bear a single bad season involving loss of crops without borrowing money at a ruinous rate of interest." But even the moderates also believed that the Act had restricted borrowing to reasonable limits and there was not much tightening by the moneylenders of their purse strings so as to cause serious inconvenience. Among good things done by the Act the sumptuary expenditure had been checked. But the Act had caused tension between the Hindu moneylenders and Musalman cultivator. The Act always formed the subject of discussion when panchayats met and a hearty dislike for it was shown. The Act combined with the restricted land tenure it was agreed by some Collectors, certainly affects the landholders' credit but, it was felt that in the long run it would be to his advantage.

Another important effect of the Relief Act had been to increase the sales of agricultural lands. This was regarded as inevitable since the Bania would not advance except on the sale of land and the agriculturist could only borrow on the mortgage of his land. Unless the cultivator parts with his land a deadlock ensues which was all to the advantage of the Bania, since he could afford to wait. Takavi was only a very partial remedy and since the agriculturist had many pressing financial wants, apart from those for the cultivation of his land, his choice was practically nil. Even in a rich district like Larkana, with bigger zamindars than elsewhere, there was a decided increase in the area of land that had changed hands, in most cases from Mohemmedans to Hindus, "There is" said the Collector, "I think, no doubt due to the introduction of the Deccan Agriculturists Relief Act into Sindh. This innovation has made the Bania very chary of advancing money on the mortgage of land even with possessory rights." In Upper Sindh money was obtainable by mortgage of land, with or without possession, by contracts for the sale of the standing crops or leases for fixed periods.

The zamindar pointed out what was true – that his Mohemedan cultivator had not a shirt ate out of earthenware and lived in a hovel made of cotton stalks; and that even then he was generally so much indebted that he could never hope to pay it all off. He worked with borrowed money and paid, as we know, an exorbitant price for it. Where land was less saleable he paid more because of the abundance of land in proportion to the cultivator, the expense of tilling it and the absence of subsidiary profit. In such parts of Sindh land was unbelievably sold at one rupee an acre and almost never went beyond twenty rupees. Placed in such circumstances the Relief Act was not of much help. His credit was bad for another reason and that was that he would cheat the moneylender if he could.

This was from out spoken men. Although he talked about his affection for his *watan* (home), the moneylender knew that it was not unlikely he would emigrate if hard-pressed for his debt. With Honourable expectations, he was a lazy debtor and made no attempt to pay off his debt even in a good year.

Hence money was dear. We have already pointed out the rates of interest. It was far from uncommon for a man to write a bond for Rs. 150, to get Rs. 100, compound interest beginning after six months; and a bond for Rs. 100 to get Rs. 60 was also, common. A great deal of money was borrowed at 100 percent per annum and even at more. These were the transactions that continued to prevail in spite of the Act. Act or no Act the immediate needs of the cultivator had to be met. He was never in a bargaining position and to meet a crying need the Bania was much better than the *takavi*. The Government was hard to deal with, there was too much of red tape The borrowed money to be paid in agreed installment over definite periods of time was a hard bargain and often difficult to fulfill. The Bania, on the other hand, would stop to think, and anxious as he may be to recover his capital or interest, was less of a machine and could be appealed to wait or give the much needed time.

In spite of the high interest his immediate need was met, and the ryot always had a running account with his **Bania**, who was his retail trader for all his purchases the food, clothes, all needs of his family and fodder for his cattle. He borrowed freely for all his various needs and they were one too many. The price of this comfort was the parting with the whole produce of his land and the ryot was allowed a set-off in his books against the rapidly increasing debt on his name. Discerning minds said that it was a mistake to suppose that the Mahommedan did not know how the Bania did him out of his money; that in reality he knew exactly the terms on which he borrowed and what he owed but he did not care what the terms were and did not intend to pay, if he could help it. With a few exceptions the normal psychology of a debtor is exactly as described above. Lack of character is the cause of his misery. He is the architect of his ruin.

Fifty percent of the Musalman cultivators, all over Sindh, were heavily in debt but the Government was always anxious to prove that it was not due to their assessment or the small profits and risks of agriculture, but to his moral qualities. The worst of these were laziness and carelessness, and these he displayed at all times. That the zamindar lacked the quality of hard work and was in love with luxury there is perhaps no doubt. His troubles that soon gathered round him, lead him to intrigue generally ending in litigation civil or criminal. To free himself meant lots of money, with the law invariable on the side of the creditor.

He was anxious to live at ease in the off-season. He seldom, cared to add to his profit by sowing melons or pumpkins, some pepper or castor-oil and make a

deal when it was ripe. How to make profit he had never learnt nor cared to. For most of the things he grew he consumed or gave them away. Most cultivators had a pony to ride, milch cows and buffaloes and she-goats. Their maintenance was expensive but his social position demanded that it be so. If he was young, he spent on women and she was the most expensive luxury he indulged in which often spelt his ruin-mental, physical and economic. I have seen wrote a Collector, a good deal of the most expensive luxury, criminal litigation, in which money has to be found to pay pleaders and policemen and bribe witnesses and reward sureties. A very considerable section of the agricultural population is in the Criminal Courts at any given moment in some capacity, and every one means money spent by some one. In such a society a thief was bribed to return the stolen property, a bond to appear in the court was broken, idleness and corruption, prevailed every common among both men and women. These failings were a subject of constant lament by the better men. All writers on the cultivating classes are agreed that a high level of morel qualities is essential in a peasantry It is equally essential that the Government to make the peasantry happy and contented should be generous and understanding. A people may become desperate by constant want and philosophy bakes no bread.

The Hindu did not care to cultivate far from a market and; made his wheel cultivation pay handsomely. While it was more expensive it was infinitely more certain than flow cultivation, and these cultivators were practically independent of difference in the inundation. An abnormally early fall in the river would affect their cotton, but nothing else. There was no doubt they worked harder and more steadily than the great mass of Musalman cultivators, and they believed in saving fruits of their labour. The saving habits of the French peasantry are too well known, so essential to meet the fortune of varying seasons it is this virtue the Bania possessed in a high decree. His British masters knew that except when he drank or gambled he made cultivation pay. Perhaps the indifference of the Mohemmedan was due partly to his character and partly to his social position and sense of strength of his position in a Muslim State.

The pattern of economy in the desert region was practically the same. In certain regions nearly two thirds the land had passed to the Hindus from the Musalmans. The transfer of land was a small area considering the largeness of the tract, the wretched condition of cultivation before the construction of canal, and the eagerness of the moneylender's to foreclose and seize land when it became valuable. It was admitted on all hands that the improvement in the canals had raised the zamindars from poverty to comparative affluence. The enwalling of the villages and construction of pucca houses by the zamindars were signs of prosperity. The extent of indebtedness of the cultivating classes to the Bantias was certainly less than upon the old canals. At the turn of the century there was a marked fall in the number of the indebted. But this rosy picture did

not continue for long and a panorama of light and shade followed down the years.

If not all over Sindh, at least in rich and fertile districts like Sukkur and Larkana, a change in economic condition of the zamindar and cultivator was discernible. The condition of the cultivating classes was very fair. They could from their cultivation make enough to live on and in non-cultivating season there was usually plenty of employment available if they cared to take it up, in the clearance of canals or other work of a similar nature. As a matter of fact much of this was done by outsiders mostly Pathans and Marwaris. Their bullock carts too could be and were used for the transport of produce when their animals were not required for agricultural operations. Many of the haris were able to keep sufficient grain for their maintenance till the next harvest and also a supply for the sowing season. The demand for cultivators was almost everywhere greater than the supply so that they were in a position to get fair terms from the zamindars.

Since the credit of the cultivator had fallen so had his ability to incur debts, but those who owned cattle could raise money on their security, others for cultivation expenses the zamindar allowed his credit to be pledged, while few of them, in case of necessity, appeared to be totally lost. It is this class that once fell into the clutches of the moneylender always found it difficult to escape. It is they who became life long prisoners in the hands of the Bania.

Even the condition of the small landholders was improving, the thrifty zamindar, though rare, even if his holding was n of large could and did live in some comfort, while some of the more intelligent put by money. Such reports showed that perhaps a, new class of zamindars was gradually coming into being. This does not mean that with the exception of the very poor the debts, were totally shaken off. The rich had become richer and the middle class were well off in the fertile regions. The condition of the class as a whole seemed to be improving. There were still even in these fertile regions a considerable number of estates, under the Manager of the Encumbered Estates, but when the owners of these Estates were asked the cause of the debt which necessitated their seeking protection, the almost invariable answer was that they were ancestral, while in reality they were contracted before the term of the present settlement. The reasons were many even the high Government land assessment. But these debts were being steadily paid off through the Manager of the Encumbered Estates. This only applies to the fertile Estates near the Indus.

If the water supply was plentiful and cultivation good than what is mentioned was possible; but if the water-supply failed and the crop suffered the condition even in these fertile regions changed for the worst. Prosperity, as mentioned over

and over again, depended on the irrigation facilities. Landlord and tenant alike worked hard to keep their water-course in good repair. The amounts received at takavi were spent in leveling and improving their lands and constructing wells.

The sums given as takavi were so meagre that they were out of all proportion to the land revenue collected except on a few occasions as can be seen from the table given. Even in those years when the sums given as takavi were high immediately in the years following large cuts were made in it to recover what was given. The takavi could never help the ryot in the form in which he needed help it was too meagre a sum. Some improvement in lands and a few wells here and there was all that could be done. Government was ever anxious to recover what she gave. The difficulties of recovery were seldom felt among the large zamindars but troubles were experienced with the petty landholders who held on to his sums with the hope that Government would finally remit them. "This dangerous impression" wrote the Collector "should be combated in every possible way; and the Commissioner agree.....that takavi should rarely, if ever, be written off."

The loans under the Land Improvement Act was utilized for the construction of wells, and those under the Agriculturists' Loans Act for the purchase of seed and cattle. Great attention had to be paid during the year to the inspection of loans came to light in quite a few districts. The needs of the ryot were far too many and hence this dishonest use of the takavi given. Whenever the inundation was normal an excuse was made to put the knife to the takavi. If ever it was felt that the takavi would rescue the petty landholders or the peasants the hold of the Bania it was a false hope. The Bania was indispensable to our economy. The help he gave the ryot to tide over monetary situations the takavi would never meet. In thirty four years only twice were large sums given and in the following years rapidly made up under the guise that the Government had changed its policy regarding takavi.

Among the most virulent and oft recurring disease in an epidemic form was plague; and the most harrassed town was Karachi. The outburst of the plague with its heavy toll of life became a marked feature of most of the important towns all over Western India at the turn of the nineteenth century. It had already taken its heaviest toll, especially in the Middle Ages in Europe, and since men's mind had been applied to eradicate this evil or lessen the fear that had gripped humanity. The very name of plague emptied towns of its population; death struck in all directions. The other two demons were cholera and smallpox, no less fearful than the plague. These diseases were rampant in India they seasonally gripped the land and took nearly every year a heavy toll in life. The towns were ill-planned with no sanitation worth the name; dark and ill-ventilated home; dirt and squalor every where. The people totally ignorant with no knowledge to meet



these demons of disease. Even the British were hard put to educate the ignorant people in ways and means to lessen the horror. It struck down both young and old alike. As plague was to the towns cholera was a terror in the villages. Here contaminated water from the streams and wells gave birth to cholera germs and even towns were none to protected from this disease. Small-pox erupted every where.

Year	Takavi
1903-04	5,66,690
1904-05	5,40,967
1905-06	5,87,547
1906-07	5,12,118
1907-08	6,25,246
1908-09	7,72,405
1909-10	7,31,892
1910-11	8,47,354
1911-12	7,96,476
1912-13	8,46,196
1913-14	8,17,244
1914-15	9,07,397
1915-16	7,39,756
1916-17	6.64 lakhs
1917-18	8.79 lakhs
1918-19	29.92 lakhs*

\*The increase of Rs. 21.13 lakhs is contributed by all the districts, being due to a greater demand for loans on account of a general rise in prices of all kinds of seeds the failure of cereal crops and the scarcity of fodder. The abnormal conditions of the season necessitated the adoption of special measures of relief to meet the situation. Hence liberal grants of takavi were made to cultivators for their own maintenance and for the upkeep of their cattle. In the Sukkur, Larkana and Thar and Parkar districts considerable amounts were advanced for the sinking of new wells.

Again and again in the Administrative Reports one reads the plague ran its usual course in the town of Karachi. A few cases of plague were reported from the town of Hyderabad. This was in 1906. Just two years later: In addition to the usual out break of plague in the town of Karachi, cholera made its appearance in portions of almost every district in the Province, but except in one or two localities the epidemic was short-lived and not particularly virulent. The high inundation often brought, when the water receded and left swamps behind, the breeding ground for mosquitos and in their wake malarial fever, another curse. In 1910-11 plague hit Hyderabad and Sukkur districts almost all of which proved

fatal. Small-pox cholera reigned in Larkana, Sukkur, Upper Sindh and Hyderabad and assumed in some of these districts serious proportions. Malaria was throughout the Province and so on in report after report every year this saga of woes continues. Writing on cholera in 1911-12 there were 7,024 cases, out of which 5,057 proved fatal. Small-pox broke out in every district and out of 7,905 persons 1,414 succumbed to the disease.

Year	Takavi	
Year		
1919-20	•••	
1920-21	16.38	lakhs
1921-22	3.49	lakhs**
1922-23	•••	
1923-24	0.84	lakhs
1924-25	3.09	lakhs
1925-26	1.85	lakhs
1926-27	7.15	lakhs
1927-28	28.74	lakhs
1928-29	3.73	lakhs
1929-30	30.16	lakhs
1930-31	6.95	lakhs
1931-32	0.96	lakhs
1932-33	0.79	lakhs
1933-34	0.87	lakhs
1934-35	0.16	lakhs
1935-36	0.7	lakhs

\*\*The decrease of Rs. 12.89 lakhs is shared by all districts and is due to the changed policy of Government in respect to the takavi grants.

To meet the terror of malaria quinine was freely distributed in most of the districts by the District Local Boards and the drug had begun to gain confidence of the illiterate classes. Gradually an awakening was taking place among the people that these diseases could be fought. Thanks to the British arrangements were in progress, shortly before the First World War for construction of a dispensary at Ladium in Karachi district, Temporary dispensaries were started at Mirpur, Sakro, and Manjhand. The Commissioner was happy to note with satisfaction the contribution of Rs 34,000 for the construction of a new hospital at Tatta to provide medical relief to women. A scheme was a-foot to start a "Louise Lawrence" Institute in Karachi in connection with the Lady Dufferin Hospital for the training of nurses, especially for the benefit of the female population of Sindh.

In the very first year of the War (1914-18) plague, as usual, broke out spreading everywhere from Karachi. Only segregation of the plague ridden could control the situation. The British were trying their best to educate the people, a very ignorant people, and in places, were being misunderstood, and opposition was made the most of by mischievous politicians. The report read "instead of isolating themselves they poured into any and every town which they fancied, with the result that no adequate precautions for disinfecting or segregating them could be taken and the infection spread with amazing rapidity throughout the Province."<sup>81</sup> Only in one place out of 7,081 cases there were 3,084 deaths. Hyderabad, the most enlightened, surprisingly suffered the most. Rapid action was being taken to curb the menace of malaria. Six sub-assistant doctors were deputed on anti-malarial duty, two in Sukkur, two in Larkana and one each in Thar and Parkar districts. They did useful work treating 9,665 cases of malaria. Quinine had become so popular with all class of people as a preventive cure that many Baniyas now found it worth while stock it for retail sales. Cases of cholera and small-pox had slightly fallen.

Dispensaries spread out at various places. In Karachi the munificence of Seth Mohatta who donated Rs 70,000 an hospital was under construction. To meet the growing demand for medical treatment a temporary pandal was put up in the compound of a Civil hospital to provide for the needs of out-patients and indoor patients were accommodated in the wards of the hospital building. The face of the medical world was changing; modern amenities were gradually creeping in. The War years, besides, witnessed the growing services of the Lady doctor which became popular and the demand for women practitioners and trained midwives grew, especially in the mofussil. The efforts of the Louise Lawrence Institute extended over the whole of Sindh and was gradually bearing fruit. But it had been a uphill struggle and the progress was not as rapid as it was expected. The Lady Dufferin hospital was becoming a progressive and efficient institution under its able Secretary. A new maternity wing to the hospital was opened by Lady Willingdon. It cost Government Rs. 75,000 but was soon borne by a generous gentleman who named it after his diseased mother. A new Municipal Epidemic Diseases Hospital was in its initial stages. The difficulty was its site which was to be away from the residential area. Seth, Mohatta gave a munificent grant of Rs 75,000 for a eye hospital at Karachi. Treatment had begun in a pandal. This activity was due to Lieut. Colonel Herbert, an eye specialist of high repute. And this was only 1915-16.

In spite of all preventive, activity, plague in Karachi in 1917 rose from 149 cases to 1,257 of which 1,109 proved fatal. Hyderabad which had been immune in the

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<sup>81</sup> Towns infected were Sukkur, Shikarpur, Rohri, Jacobabad Larkana, Kotri Tatta Shandapur, Tando Adam and Tando Muhammed Khan.

previous year was visited by the terror for full four months, despite a large part of the town had been evacuated soon after the outbreak. There were 780 deaths out of 1,068 cases in the town and its suburbs. Ninety died of small-pox in Sukkur. And due to heavy rains and high inundation malaria was widespread and stayed longer than usual. All round sickness impeded the collection of both kharif and rabi harvests.

In the last year of the War (1918-19) Sindh was most seriously affected by the appalling visitation of influenza which began, in September and lasted for about three months. First it appeared in large towns and swept over smaller town and villages capturing the whole province it claimed about 1,90,000 victims. Like famine, in several cases, whole families were wiped out and in some entire villages were depopulated. Owing to this terror kharif harvesting and rabi sowing operations were considerably retarded, trade was at a stand-still and every other form of work was dislocated. The disease died out by the end of December. Every possible medical relief was made available. The taluka doctors toured their respective beats and treated the sick. Taluka Local Board and philanthropic persons assisted in providing free medical relief. Local Committees were organised, wherever possible, to give relief to the poor by distributing food and medicine. Besides this special visitor the old familiar faces were there plague cholera and small-pox. Quite a number of people fell a victim to their onslaught. For example in Karachi alone, of the 350 victims of the plague 262 proved fatal.

In the years that followed the War in nearly every report, mortality from one disease or another was always there. In 1922-23 we learn of high female mortality at the hands of the native dais for there continued a shortage of trained midwives. This was attracting special attention and a temporary septic hospital was established in Shikarpur under the management of the Lady Dufferin Hospital Committee. Deaths from influenza continued to be recorded but it had spent its force. In 1921-25 we hear of a Director of Public Health given a grant of Rs. 20,000 to meet the attack by malaria. The statistic on diseases show a distinct fall in the number of victims, especially in plague after 1926-27. It was now a practice to send touring medical officers to various areas wherever a disease struck; they did useful and effective work. In Thar and Parkar district alone as many as 21,820 cases of malaria were treated by medical officers. In 1927-28 it was reported that it is gratifying to note that no deaths at all occurred from plague during the year. Though plague it appeared had gone but cholera and malaria continued. Especially the former claimed quite a few in 1929-30. In Larkana a special hospital for cholera patients was opened; even malaria was of the severest type throughout Sindh. Throughout the thirties it is the same story of man's struggle to destroy disease or at least, lessen its virulence. But no where could it be said that the disease had taken an epidemic form. Timely aid had definitely lessened mortality; the diseases were better controlled and always checked in

time. Thanks to the effort of the Government that had awoken the people to the possibility of meeting this terror. This awareness goes to the credit side of the British rule in India. An account of the vital statistic is not possible as it is not available consistently even in the Census reports.

It would not be, I trust, out of place to mention here the general condition of the people at large in Sindh. The great bulk of the occupants of land being but peasants cultivating but small plots of land were as well to do or otherwise as anywhere else in Western India. Most, perhaps, as already mentioned in debts; the usual improvident, careless dealing with money kept them in that condition. Many held small patches of land under well irrigation, cultivated in partnership with others and this brought in a pretty certain and regular return,, and a steady supply of cash invaluable to those who had any desire to be as independent of the Bania as possible. The comparatively small body of occupants of 50 to 100 acres seemed to be fairly well off. This could be affirmed of all classes of occupants whose habits were not improvident; but improvident habits were more prevailing than thrift.

By the nineties of the last century conditions may have slightly improved; and apathy and indebtedness were being tackled boldly; yet there was hardly a zamindar or cultivator who could face the future with courage after a single bad season and failure of crop without sinking into ruinous debt. Even in fertile districts the want of well-to-do zamindars (that is, large holders) was very marked. This was true in most talukas in Sindh. Thanks to the uncertain land policy of the British.

The anxiety to come by as much revenue as possible is proved by the application of what were called coercive processes. Notices were issued under section 152 of the Land Revenue Code in all districts. One of the main causes wrote the Commissioner "is no doubt the increase in the amount of revenue for collection." These notices were issued even in districts ravaged by floods. The notices were followed by fines under Section 148, of the Land Code practically every year; these depended on the difficulty experienced in realizing land revenue. Take a year like 1907; "As a result, in spite of unusually heavy remissions, due mainly to floods, there was an increase in the current demand of nearly 5½ lakhs. This was accompanied by an outstanding of former years which amounted to 7½ lakhs. Yet, during the season under review, the district officers succeeded in collecting 95 percent of the current demand and 146 percent of arrears. In spite of these collections the outstanding was approximately 9½ lakhs of which it was expected ultimately to realise all but a lakh of rupees" ere the season ended. We have already referred to the greed for revenue that did not contribute a little to progressive poverty among the peasant and zamindar alike.

Between 1907 and 1911 the increase in notice under coercive processes multiplied to 1,544 and fines rose from 39 to 349 to 1,132 and 3,066 respectively. By the outbreak of the War (1914) in Sindh the land revenue demand rose by 4 ½ percent to 1.21 crores inclusive of arrears. Of this total Rs. 3.32 lakhs were suspended and Rs. 8.37 lakhs remitted leaving a closing balance to be collected of 11.3 crores. "Recoveries were good in most districts". We have already given in brief the history of land revenue, the mounting collections gradually reaching from lakhs to crores. Even in the thirties of this century, when seasons were uniformly bad the land revenue remained unaffected. A slight turn in tide came after the Barrage scheme; but even before that could pick up a tempo, the next War of 1939 was on.

Sindh's main prosperity depended upon cotton; in any year when cotton gave a bumper crop and its prices rose it marked the well-being of both the ryot and his landlord. Of the several other factors that united to make a successful year were stable agricultural prices, timely inundation, rainfall when and where needed, export trade etc. The possibility of these factors working unitedly was to ask the impossible and besides if one part of the land experienced the joy of living, sorrow and failure would surely be in some other place. Public health was nearly always at stake for one terror or another would stalk the land. The question was to mitigate the evil where it raised its head and under the British attention was being paid to that. The rule tried a benevolent despotism. Till the end even experiments in democracy were never the peoples' rule no more than it is today. But the people received their early training in democratic ways of living. Growing attention was being paid to the general development of the country. For example, the growth of the premier city of the Province, like Karachi meant the development of the city and port which was carried on uninterruptedly. The operations of the Port Trust were on quite a large scale and the Commissioner was glad to note that the municipal administration of the city was being more and more efficient.

Referring to the agricultural prosperity of the years prior to the War (1914) it was noted that there was "in late year in the cotton tracts, and the cultivation of cotton" a steady extension all over Sindh. Further development depended on cotton, prices, in fact it was said, that "the interest of our cultivators are bound up with the growing commercial crops". There was an increasing tendency on the part of some large landholders to invest money in permanent improvements to land, and the new Government canals were bringing money and infusing a fresh spirit into some of the drier tracts. High prices of agricultural produce, increased irrigation facilities and productive improvements of lands raised the condition of the landholders. If there were a considerable rise in the level of wages it was expected that labour would learn to depend on their own efforts

and the rate of progress would be faster. These are some of the pictures in the yearly administrative reports.

In the first year of the war the fortunes of the Province were mixed, there was in parts favorable inundation and the yield of good crops; while in four districts the floods, the fall in the price of cotton, the outbreak of plague and the general depression in trade were responsible for unfavorable conditions. The kharif harvest the next year was excellent. The fodder supply abundant and a marked improvement in public health. The agricultural economy, in these years, was undergoing a change whereby the actual cultivator decided the crop that was to be sown and was in a position to disregard the wishes of the zamindar. An intelligent landlord may desire to introduce improvements but became impotent through the obstruction of his tenant-labourer. Tradition prescribed that the tenant was to bear the expenditure on ploughs, machinery for lifting water, etc. and hence the zamindar was reluctant to invest capital if he could not readjust his share of the produce. It was said that the Punjabi immigrants on the Jamrao Canal were more receptive of new ideas than the conservative Sindhis. The Punjabi example was happily spreading Cooperative Credit Societies had increased from 34 to 56, and the progress was distinctly satisfactory. The Government had decided to appoint a full-time Assistant Registrar of Cooperative Societies in Sindh who were to begin to work in April 1918. The economic condition that prevailed as the War was ending have been already given; and how prices rose affecting the poor and middle classes and what measures were taken to meet the situation.<sup>82</sup>

With the War ended a new crop of difficulties arose. It seemed almost impossible to judge what the ultimate economic effects of the rise of prices, resulting from post War conditions, the general world rise of prices, the active demand of labour for industrial purposes and the consequent rise of labour for industrial purposes and the consequent rise of wage would be. It was expected that within a year or two the position would probably become somewhat established and it would be possible to review the new conditions of the agricultural population with greater clarity than at present. The twenties opened with a fall in cotton prices and shorter demand abroad, the prices remained where they stood the year before. Though the returns from agriculture were better in 1921-22 the condition of the cultivator was not greatly improved. The condition of labour improved; but cultivators of cash crops (cotton and sugarcane) felt the prices

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<sup>82</sup> But from April 1918 special measures were taken. A controller of Prices and a Deputy Controller were appointed from Karachi town, and an Assistant to the Commissioner of Civil Supplies in Sind. In Karachi it was possible to control the operations of food-grain merchants by the system of priority certificates. When traffic on the railway was restricted only those merchants were permitted to import food grains who agreed to sell at fixed prices. The system has been gradually improved and after some experience - worked efficiently, with very beneficial result to the poor.... Administrative Report 1917-18.

stationary self–dependent small farmers chiefly cultivating their own land and employing the minimum of labour the year 1924-25 was a favorable one and his living conditions improved. While this was so with small cultivators the larger landholders were troubled, by the rise in wages which robbed them of most of their profits. All throughout this decade it appears that wages continued high and scarcity of labour was felt everywhere. The prices were now showing a downward tendency. This meant an increase in the purchasing power – this meant reasonable ease and comfort in the living of the wage earner. While the masses improved the zamindars felt the pinch. Those who lived on hired labours were hard hit. The Administrative Report remarked: “These facts may lead to very marked economic change in future, but it is not possible, at this stage, to forecast the nature of these changes as everything will depend on whether the conditions mentioned above continue for some years.”

As an outcome of the representation of the Sindh Muhammadan Association to the Governor, on the occasion of his visit to the Province in 1925, that the agricultural classes in Sindh, were rapidly losing their land to capitalists and other non–agricultural classes, a special officer (Mr. S. H. Covernton) was appointed by Government to frame proposals for legislation on the lines of the Punjab Land Alienation Act.

As the decade closed (1920-30) the most important economic change which was taking place was the general heavy fall in prices which suggested that agriculture was entering upon a new period to be characterized by a lower price level than had prevailed so far. This in turn was expected to bring about a general adjustment in the standard of living. The influence of expanding communications both by road and rail and with the Barrage scheme in the thirties the markets, exports, inland transport must all have influenced the prices and hence living conditions. More details on communications later; easy movement of goods, especially food grains must influence market and prices. In 1935-36 the important event of the year was the separation of Sindh from the Bombay Presidency which took place from 1st April 1936 and Sir Lancelot Graham assumed charge of the new Province as its Governor.

Education had hardly made any strides among the agricultural classes. The vast majority remained illiterate especially so among the Muhammedan population. We have already mentioned this But in closing we may mention there were signs of an awakening in the near future and the matter continued to engage the attention and interest of the leaders of the Muhammedan Community. The Sindh Madressah was in an exceptionally flourishing and efficient state, while the local Madressah at Larkana, Nanshahro and Pithoro were working satisfactorily. At Sukkur the first stage towards the protected Madressah was reached in the



opening of a Muhammadan boarding house which was attached to the local high school.

In larger towns education was taken to more avidly. In Hyderabad in particular both the Navalrai Hiranand Academy and the Nava Vidhyalaya were doing very well. The new building of the Nava Vidhyalaya was in occupation already though the building was yet not fully complete. The project for a new high school at Larkana was delayed by the difficulty of agreement as to a site. All these were effected and more by the time our story closed.

Surprising but true that it was in the desert that education was more sought. For instance villages, which in the Nara division might have had as attendance about 40 or 50 in their schools had more than 100. There were even girls schools well attended and were a special feature of the desert. In That and Parkar the Hindus were more responsive but the apathy of the Muslim continued as ever. No amount of exhortation had any effect. Hardly a few Muslim boys were found receiving education in public schools. The ratio of the educated among the Muslims remained very low as compared to the Hindus to the end of the British rule in India. In education wealth and profession this largest minority community remained poor. They were given to certain professions in which they excelled. It is to these activities to which we shall turn later.

On the whole the tone of the papers was generally moderate and inoffensive. Most of the papers confined themselves to a discussion of petty matters of no general interest; but the generality were well conducted and often expressed intelligent and helpful opinions on leading questions of the day. These were the opinions of the rulers. But there were indications, and quite frequent to, that even in some of the better class papers, criticism of Government policy was frequently published which as the British administration said tends seriously to mar their repute.

To the millions the British did not matter not till the last decade of the 19th century. Nationalism was come thing very recent If there was one factor that enabled Britain to rule India it was the apathy of the people of this country. Apathy which was regarded as loyalty by them. They deluded themselves by such foolish statements like: "The journey of their Imperial Majesties to India and their coronation at Delhi in December last aroused feelings of profound loyalty and enthusiasm throughout the Province...". One of the papers of known repute had to be administered a reproof for its editorial but such occasional lapses from good taste were not very frequent hence they are best forgotten. A certain number of mushroom papers which were in existence, said the Government of the day, had to suspend publication. They were far to uncomfortable to the rulers; but few Anglo – vernacular papers of the Province were steadily improving their

news and tone and were in consequence increasing their influence. The British lived in a world of their own. Their main emphasis was on the political out-look continues to be free from anxiety and the cooperation of the zamindar and people with the officers of Government is as loyal as ever. While this continued there was nothing to fear, the general well being of the people was only secondary.

Sindh being a Muslim Province the self restraint of the Muslims was put to a somewhat severe test when Turkey cast in her lot with Germany. But thanks to their well informed leaders wrote the Government, who exerted themselves to explain to the uninformed the real genesis of the war, their loyalty remains beyond question. Public assurances were given that the sacred places of Islam would be protected eventually removed any misgiving that still remained. But the Hindus in the mofussil were generally the people who fed on false rumours and exaggerated accounts of enemy successes on land and of the exploits of the Emden at Sea were mainly responsible for shaking the faith in British success. This had disturbed the peace of the Province and there were thefts, lawlessness in parts and dacoities.

During the War there was a steady flow of emigration from the ports of Karachi to Mahommerah (for the Anglo Persian oil fields) and Basra. The emigrants, came principally from the Punjab, Guzerat, the United Provinces and Karachi itself, were for the most part traders, artisans, coolies or domestic servants. The introduction of the passport system had called attention to the widespread commercial activities of Sindhi merchants in all parts of the world and to the large number of persons who were sent abroad every year as their agents and employees. A reference has already been made to this feature of Sindhi life. Nearly 500 passports had been issued at Karachi in 1915-16 to places in Asia, Africa and America; and with the restoration of order in Central Asia the Shikarpur merchants had begun to resume their visits to the khanates in Turkistan.

As the War progressed<sup>83</sup> and in spite of the Sharif of Mecca's declaration of independence the Province remained quiet. The illiterate masses and the majority of zamindars and Hindus were wholly occupied with their usual

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<sup>83</sup> Proclaiming the extreme views of the pro-Turkish party, which is headed by a few dubious characters, ex-Members of the now extinct Khudam Kaba Society and extremist agitators, these men have organised the Sind Khilafat Committee which is carrying out a dangerous propaganda in Sind by the misrepresentation of facts. The so called anti-Khilafat supported by the movements of eminent learned men from different parts of India has not been in vain. While in a Mohemmadan State this movement had demonstrated the fact that the claims of the Turkish Sultan to the Khilafat are not absolutely incontestable. The agricultural classes, which form the majority of the Mohemmadan population of the Province, are as a whole, profoundly indifferent to the question of the Khilafat, but the agitators are trying to stir them up. Administrative Report, 1918-19.

pursuits and they were not at all perturbed by the upheaval abroad. India was not touched by the War nor were people interested in its progress. The newspapers were the main source of information. Sometime such statements were given like; A deep impression was made by the sudden and tragic death of Lord Kitchener, which evoked sincere and spontaneous expressions of sympathy from all parts of the Province. Kitchener was associated with the Indian scene but neither in India nor in Egypt his memory would evoke any sympathy or his death a tear.

To keep the vested interests on their side, the Governor and Lady Willingdon visited Umarnot, Hyderabad, Khairpur, Jacobabad and Karachi. Here durbars were held, sannads of titles conferred by the Viceroy, swords of honour given to the so called deserving who had rendered assistance to Government during these trying time. As the war drew to a close the fall of Baghdad greatly impressed the masses and if there were any doubts of success of the Allies the entry of America put those to rest. The response to the War loan was satisfactory the contribution to date amounted to Rs. 170 lakhs. The people continued to suffer the economic pressures of the War without complain. Then, as now, the people of this country could suffer anything. Some of the newspapers were rather critical of the Government and its policies.<sup>84</sup> The clamours of the Home Rule League in parts of India were echoed in the Province. The Home Rule had set up its local branches all over the country but the response was yet very small. Many of the papers were absorbed in the discussion of the local systems of taxation, the question of the introduction of house tax in some of the principal towns arousing some interested opposition. Quite a number of towns in the Province had no press for the local publication of any newspaper. Often the Government had recourse to the provisions of the Press Act. But the British love of democracy kept the press alive and even though their policies were, at times, severely criticized the press had been helpful in other directions, for example explaining the objects of the War loan to the people etc.

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<sup>84</sup> While some papers are loyal, and others, moderate in criticism of Government measures, there are others which by their extravagant attacks on all Government measures and Government officers are rendering the administration of Province more difficult but the painful necessity of taking action to control them has always to be kept under consideration.

Out of the Satyagraha movement arose the publication of an inflammatory pamphlet entitled "The New Call" of which the writer and printer were prosecuted and sentenced to imprisonment. "The Home Ruler" ceased publication on the prosecution of its editor, who was the printer of "The New Call". "The Sind Samachar" and the "Sind Advocate" after the printing of objectionable articles were called upon to furnish security, whereupon they suspended publication. The "Hindvasi", which was the leading organ of extremist views in Sind, ceased publication with the prosecution of its editor.. He was convicted and sentenced to four years' rigorous imprisonment. The Hindu which had ceased publication in 1918 when called upon to deposit security, has reappeared since the suspension of the "Hindvasi" and has more or less taken the place of the latter. Administrative Reports.

The war loans were liberally subscribed to especially in Karachi. The subscription for the district, including the town of Karachi, amounted to Rs. 132 lakhs as Rs. 56 lakhs earlier. The result was largely due to the exertions of a number of communal committees and a vigorous propaganda committee which worked with energy and system. The zamindars, as expected, contributed very liberally, they knew how closely their interests lay with the Government. Their subscriptions, wrote the Commissioner, were a remarkable indication of their generous loyalty. One zamindar Mr. Ghulam Mahomed Khan Talpur of Tando Bago, set the good example of investing Rs. 60,000 in the war loan. But if the zamindars did so well, the Commissioner could not speak with praise of the trading classes. In Karachi alone was the response good but in Hyderabad where large fortunes were acquired, the subscriptions were painfully meagre. This was all the more regrettable, as this very class had by its foreign trade under the British flag accumulated large profits. Of course the village Bania thought more of the interest he lost by not lending on extortionate interest to ignorant cultivator or the needy zamindar. For ages this class had never been interested in the fate of any Government. They were far too self-centered to think of any one else.

The war was taking its toll and would continue to do so in prices, especially from the poor, in cloth and food grains. But fresh opportunities by the rise in wages and work relieved the majority from distress. Besides, the demand for men of all classes in Mesopotamia was of great benefit to enterprising and ambitious people. Victory in nearly all theatres of war followed by an Armistice was greeted by a war weary world with a sigh of relief. The Home Rule Movement with its noise and attention was regarded by the British as detrimental to their parental authority and the spirit of discipline. Soon a disillusioned India with all its sacrifice in men and money stood face to face with a more drunken Imperialism than that of the nineteenth century. The lion having drunk blood was now even thirstier than ever before. More repression and more blood flowed than before. Promises made were broken or flouted. Unhappy India was up in arms.

## FOUR

### LABOUR

The growth and development of labour and wages earlier than the last decade of the nineteenth century is not possible. A historical survey of such a nature is dependent on a consistent statistical record for some length of time. But in the absence of which an economic history has to depend on snippets of information where and when procurable. Otherwise the story is the figment of the writer's imagination and preconceived notions. Most of the economic historians are tempted to have recourse to read implications in records as they chose to or use the facts and figures which makes anything but true history. We are, therefore, agreed an economic survey, unlike the political, suffers from the point of view of a consistent narrative. And oft times there are wide gaps in the story which makes the reader feel that the writer has merely given a few facts here and there without linking them into a consistent whole. For example wages and prices should go together. The condition of labour, good or bad economically, depends on what he earns and how much he can buy from his earnings in the market under the prevailing prices. What are the bare necessities of the times and what are considered the luxuries in his budget must all be arrived at before a fair picture can be drawn of his sustenance. To arrive at all these acts is difficult and with the type of figures available an economic historian is free to play with his evidence and statistic as he may choose to. There are the difficulties in our path.

Taking into consideration the important district towns in Sindh, and if one can rely on the data submitted, if we examine only Karachi and Hyderabad, the following are the wages given between 1895 and 1915:

Year	District	Mason	Carpenter	Agricultural Laborer
1895 to 1904	Karachi	As 14 to 1 Rs per diem	As 14 to 1 Rs per diem	As 4 to As 8
1905 to 1910	Karachi	Rs 1. to Rs 1.4	Rs 1. to Rs 1.4	As 6 to As 8
1911 to 1913	Karachi	Rs 1.4 to Rs. 1.8	Rs 1.4 to Rs. 1.8	
1914	Karachi	Rs 1.8 to Rs 1.12	Rs 1.8 to Rs 1.12	
1915	Karachi	Rs 1.12 to Rs 2	Rs 1.12 to Rs 2	As 12 to Rs 1
1895 to 1905	Hyderabad	Rs 1.10 per day	Rs 1.10 per day	As 5 per day
1906 to 1907	Hyderabad	Rs 1.4 per day	Rs 1.4 per day	
1910 to 1912	Hyderabad	Rs 1.8 per day	Rs 1.6 per day	As 10 per day
1913 to 1914	Hyderabad	Rs 1.8 per day	Rs 1.8 per day	As 10 per day
1915	Hyderabad	Rs 1.8 per day	Rs 1.12 per day	As 10 per day

In Upper Sindh it began with Rs. one per day and by 1915 it had reached Rs. 2.6 in the case of the mason and carpenter. The agricultural labour earned As. 5 per day and rose to As. 12 by 1915. In Larkana and Sukkur it varied from 12 As. to Rs. 1 and reached Rs. 1.4 in 1912, while the agricultural labourer began with 4 As. and earned 8 As. in 1912 in the latter; in the former there was a gradual rise from a rupee to one rupee and eight annas and in agriculture from 5 As. a day to 8 As. in 1915, and so in like manner elsewhere. The War years (1914-18) gave a boost to labour everywhere. There was something to do for everybody. And the Middle East as a theatre of War there was an additional attraction for labour.

Between 1916 and 1922 in Karachi the mason and carpenter earned from Rs. 28 in 1916 to Rs. 45 in 1922 per month, the latter from Rs. 40 to Rs. 50. The agricultural labour like the latter two earned Rs. 15 per month and rose to Rs. 28 by 1922. All over the daily wage had risen to Rs. 3 and that of the agricultural labour to Rs. 1 in certain places. To work out the cost of living a consistent data of prices is a must. Which is not available except the general mention that prices rose everywhere due to the uncertain conditions created by the war. And even after the war ended the general tendency to a rise in prices could not be controlled. Then followed uneasy years till the thirties when the World economic depression set in. The general effect of the prices on the economic situation has been already described.

In the census of 1921 an effort has been made to collect data of the cost of living by examining certain families. But it does not give a very clear picture. They have taken into consideration families both in the urban and rural areas. First, they have taken the cost of the bare necessities of life and then what could be regarded as luxuries. The burden of debt and other responsibilities are ignored hence we have the following Table:

Family Budget (Sind)			
Main head	Detailed Head	Urban	Rural
Compulsory	1. Food	65.6	60.6
	2. Clothing	13.5	13.5
	3. Rental	4.4	3.2
	4. Ceremonies, charity etc.	5.1	6.5
	5. Others	3.2	6.0
	Total Compulsory	91.8	89.2
Voluntary	6. Education	2.0	1.3
	7. Doctor's fee etc.	1.1	1.1
	8. Others	5.1	8.4
	Total Voluntary	8.2	10.8
Number of families examined		305	242
<p>"Urban" – means from localities with population 10,000 and over.  "Rural" the rest.  Other Compulsory – Furniture, repairs, fuel and lightening, bedding, taxation and interest on loans.  Other Voluntary – Servants, travel, (including pilgrimages), amusements, luxuries, one tenth of cost of jewelery, postage etc.</p>			

There are just approximately some figures that lead us no where Doctor and education in rural area is just unthinkable as several other items also. But this was not the only way efforts were made to arrive at understanding how wages and labour balanced the family budget. The following was an attempt by a well known native official of wide experience to arrive at the earnings of a Sindh peasant, of course, approximately. Taking the area watered by one wheel as 10 acres, and the produce at a fair, or rather good, average price, namely, Rs. 40 came to Rs. 280. Deducting from this the Government assessment, which may be put as Rs. 20, and dividing the remainder into three equal parts, we got about Rs. 86 for the zamindar and Rs. 174 for the peasant (haris). For a field of 10 acres there would probably be four of them, each owning a pair of bullocks and the share of each would be Rs. 43.8.0. Even a Sindhi peasant with a family of say three persons, could not live for a year on this amount; therefore, unless he was able to engage in rabi cultivation also, he would have to find some other work during winter and spring, such as road-making or canal clearance, or else he must live on the bounty of his zamindar. He must get the zamindar to be a security with the Bania for advances of grain which he cannot possibly repay. Among the liabilities which brought so many zamindars to insolvency these bad debts of haris often formed a prominent item.

Another estimate puts the earning of a hari from the kharif crop at Rs. 30 after paying for the keep of his bullock. Both estimates present too dark a picture unless allowance is made for several circumstances which often qualify them. In the first place partners in a field may be father and son, or sons so that the earning of several individuals combined to support one household. Secondly, quite a few haris own camels, which they hire out or cattle and goats, the produce of which they sell. The upkeep costs nothing, for the haris has a right to graze free on the waste lands of the zamindar. Yet another resource was between the ripening of the grain and the final batai in December there was a period of three to four months during which the *hari* had the crops entirely in his power. It was known that during those months the habitual dependence of many haris on the Bania ceased almost entirely. Therefore a guess calculation gave the harts Rs. 100 as his average annual income provided he was fairly industrious. It was said this could support in comfort a family of three or four persons being in fact more than a day labourer in the country could earn. To me this could, be perhaps a bare margin of sustenance, or only wishful thinking. The contents of the word 'comfort' in its ordinary sense is something that is totally unknown to our Indian peasant. Such lame efforts to equate income and livelihood, were repeatedly made by the British with no satisfactory result. I am afraid we shall have to leave it at that the only thing one can do is to equate the poverty of Sindh with that prevailing all over India.

A marked change in the earning capacity of labour in urban, and rural areas could be easily perceived. In towns and its outlying areas the opportunity to earn were distinctly obvious. And here hard work and industry would pay a much higher dividend than in the rural landscape. The capacity to earn often depends on the ability to work hard. Today, one of the most important reasons why certain nations have taken the lead, especially in industries, is their capacity in output – their willingness to work long hours. The Sindhi, like labour all over this country, does not work more than he obliged and he inclines naturally towards a conscientious observance of Friday and other holidays. With the exception of the Japanese in the East we are a lazy people. Sindh is an attractive market for labour, and quite a few from the surrounding areas, the Punjab, Guzerat and Kutch, seek work in Sindh in case during the harvest. Sindh sometimes waits anxiously for labour to emigrate. These labourers make good money. With the programmes for the improvement of the country like railways, docks, canals etc., the demand for labour increased and wages continued to improve. Skilled labour was sought and held its own market – not so in the rural areas and rural aid was seldom paid in cash. In the villages the Sindhi had little use of money. Here the practices that prevailed were the same as all over Western India. When the harvest was gathered, landlord, tenants and farm hands came together, with the carpenter who repaired the water wheel, the potter who mended the chatties, the blacksmith who made the tools and repaired



the plough and shod the bullock and even the old maulvi who taught the children to read the Koran; and each got his share, large or small, according to the age old custom that none dared to dispute. Nearby stood the Bania to recover from each except the landlord, his loan of the grain, tobacco etc., which he had supplied during the past season. Hardly had he paid his debt when he must borrow again. And so life went on. Very few had to be paid who were not regular farm hands. Mutual cooperation had bred the habit of mutual help and at the reaping time the neighbours help neighbours.

Sindh's labour problem, as stated, was solved by an influx of people from the adjoining areas. In Sindh there was no emigration or immigration strictly so called. The temporary immigrants, *viz.*, the Kachis and Tharis came to Sindh in larger numbers than usual from the hills for the rice harvest; and there was the ordinary influx of Pathan labourer from trans-frontier territory, to work on the clearance of Government and zamindari canals during the cold weather. Such inroads were also due to the absence of rains *viz.*, from neighbouring Kutch or Rajputana. Most of these people returned with the rains in their countries. At times nearly four-fifths of the inhabitants of the Desert were reported to have left their homes in consequence of the drought. They went in all directions—Kathiawar, Kutch, Rajputana, Khairpur State and the irrigated parts of Sindh. Only to return when normal conditions were restored.

It was reported from many parts of Sindh that Tharis; Marwaris, Kutchis and Bhils supplied labour and were it not for them, the agricultural operations would be greatly hampered. The number of local indigenous cultivators and labourers was very limited. On account of the rising standard of comfort and as an easy supply of labour by Tharis, Marwaris etc., the majority of Sindhi haris were getting into the habit of personally taking no part in most of the difficult operations pertaining to agriculture. This labour from the out-lying parts had not only proved to be most indispensable lot for clearing cotton fields of grass, stirring up the soil, and picking cotton but had taken the place of haris and turned out in most cases to be very useful cultivators. Kutchies generally were preferred, but Kolhis were the most hard-working. Such a state of affairs had given the cultivator a dominant position and he dictated his terms to the zamindar. He invariably received takavi and did not hesitate to decamp when, owing to a bad season or otherwise, arrears accumulated which he was not able to repay.

This influx of neighbouring labour was not invariably the outcome of the search for work. Most of them were cattle owners first and cultivators afterwards. All their money was invested in cattle and their social position and influence depended almost entirely on the size of their flocks and herds. Yet with an improvidence almost maddening in its stupidity, they refused, save in rare

instances, to make any provision for the future, and although in a good year they could easily cut and stock enough grass to last over two seasons they surprisingly refused to do so, The failure of the rains found them totally unprepared and hence importing of the grass was impossible, they had to leave home and wander far a field in search of fodder. The exact loss of cattle was difficult to compute but it must have been, indeed, heavy in such years of drought.

The Sindh labour market fluctuated and affected the scale of wages. With the influx of outsiders the scales of both skilled and unskilled labour rose and fell according to the supply and demand in labour both in the towns and the country. The year to year account wherever possible has the same story to tell for example: "Mr. Martin reports that in Larkana labour could be had for the asking and men undertook harvesting work for one-third of the normal rates. Zamindars in the Karachi, Larkana and Thar and Parkar districts took advantage of the abundance and cheapness of labour to effect improvements in their lands."

When the war broke out the rates for unskilled labour was marked by a slight increase due, partly to a rise in the price of foodstuffs, and partly to a shortage of labour. The emigration of labour from the surrounding areas was also effected due to the unrest engendered by the outbreak of the War. Many Kutchis and Marwaris in Lower Sindh fled to their countries in the early stages of the War for fear of conscription. The security of labour synchronizing with the fall in prices of cotton put the zamindars in the cotton-growing areas of Hyderabad, Thar and Parkar and Nawabshah districts to much difficulty and loss. The pickers either refused the usual payment in kind or made exorbitant demand for cash. There was also some wastage of the crops owing to the delay in picking caused by the shortage of labour. Labour returned the next year with no shortage in the kharif or rabi season. There was lack of rainfall which resulted in shrinkage in cultivation which reduced the demand for agricultural labour and set free local cultivators as casual labourers. This insulted in a fall from eight annas to six annas a day wages of unskilled labour.

As the War drew on there was a great demand for both skilled and unskilled labour for operations in Mesopotamia. Hence security of labour was felt at home. The wages of unskilled labour rose by 25-50 percent. Skilled labour in the Port of Karachi and elsewhere commanded rates of wages never dreamt of before.

The problem of securing an adequate and steady supply of labour for agricultural purposes in Sindh was not easy of solution. The floating element supplied by Marwar, Kutch and other out side places often disappeared fast when it was most needed in a favorable season of heavy rainfall as their own countries had probably had similar good fortune. The scarcity was also

aggravated by the ravages among the local population by malaria which was invariably the close follower of heavy rains. By 1917-18 the wages of skilled and unskilled labour were marked by an average increase of 43 percent and 67 percent respectively. This was due partly to a rise in the cost of living and partly to a shortage of labour caused by non-immigration due to good seasons. Recruiting the work on the Karachi port and operation in the Mesopotamia also affected the labour market and maintained the wages at a high level. The spread of malaria, for Sindh being a land of swamps, played no small part in the spread of stickiness among the people. As the War came to a close the influenza epidemic had a very disastrous effect on the labour market. This epidemic was to take a heavy toll in life. Wages continued high.

Though by 1922-23 there was a fall in the prices of food grains wages still continued high. This was so due to the prices of other necessities of life continuing at a high level and partly owing to the standard of living of the labouring classes having risen during the last few years. The slight increase in wages in 1923-24 was attributed to the demand on the Lloyd Barrage works. The supply of labour was, however, equal to the demand.

The North Western Railway strike originated in the Punjab spread to Sindh where it began on the 17th April 1925. The majority of workmen in the carriage and loco workshops at Rohri joined out of sympathy with the Punjab strikers. They "were for the most part ignorant of the grounds of the strike. Satisfactory Police arrangements were made to prevent rioting and intimidation. The strikers confined their energies to peaceful, demonstrations and persuasions in the beginning but later on in the Sukkur district they resorted to unlawful methods of intimidations. In order to avoid breaches of peace forty sowars from the special force at Jacobabad were called into Sukkur and thirty arrests were made. This had a salutary effect and the strikers almost at once abandoned their threats of violence. All, the arrested persons, excepting two, who were convicted were released on giving security for good behavior.

The strike caused a certain amount of inconvenience to the mercantile community owing to the delays to which goods traffic was exposed. The inconvenience was, however, not serious as the goods traffic though retarded at no time broke down or was seriously obstructed. The strike caused no dislocation of passenger traffic. The strike had no political significance and, ended in a fiasco. The strikers failed to enlist the sympathy of the public and finding little support from them surrendered, unconditionally after about two months. This weapon in the hands of labour was to grow over the years till today, as we write this, the entire Indian economy is held to ransom by a nationwide railway strike. A demand by the railway men beyond the resources of the State Powerful trade unions that make or mark national economic growth.

By 1926-27 the Lloyd Barrage works afforded sufficient employment for the labouring classes and in spite of the trade depression there was no unemployment. Unemployment in the ranks of the literate had begun who sought work according to their new social standing. The Government had little or nothing to offer this educated class, for recruitment to the clerical posts had its limits. Frustration and disappointment set in, till, even, today the discontent grew so that independent India struggles with the same problem, the situation even worse. Besides the Barrage the demand for labour increased owing to the construction of the new feeder railway lines. Improvement of canals, and communications recruited fresh labour. With the exception of a few places wages continued to rule high.

In 1930-31 the decrease in wages was, however, not proportionate to the fall in prices and this was due apparently to the fact that the demand for labour on the construction of Barrage works, feeder railways, repairs to canal bunds and breaches caused by floods, continued throughout the year. No dearth of labour was felt anywhere and there was no lack of employment. Many zamindars complained that though the prices had fallen the cost of agricultural labour continued to rule high. In 1931-32 the fall in prices, the trade depression and the completion of the gigantic Barrage works were the main reasons for the fall in wages of labour. The next year marks a further fall in wages due to the completion of the Sindh Left Bank Feeder Railways. Karachi was perhaps the only place that continued to attract emigrated labour from Kutch, Kathiawar and especially United Provinces. On account of trade depression and the continued slump in prices, the wages of both skilled and unskilled labour continued to be low almost all over Sindh.

This brief survey of labour and wages since the war gives us an insight into labour conditions prevailing in Sindh. From the evidence available there was seldom any shortage of labour in Sindh to the contrary Sindh was a good market for labour and afforded the sufficient incentive to even the labourers from the surrounding areas. In such a world of demand and supply wages would rule satisfactory and it was the zamindar class that was invariably at the mercy of the worker who put down his own terms. It was only in the late thirties, when most of the important works had ceased and the trade depression set in that wages showed a tendency to fall. The agricultural economy of Sindh was dependent on emigrated labour so much so that even the normal work of the haris was left to the outsiders. For the purpose of agriculture it had become a habit to wait, every year, for labour from across the frontier. There is reason to believe that the haris in Sindh were a lazy class. They were spoilt by the zamindars who stood guarantee for the grain borrowed by the haris from the Bania, hired the labour that came from without as additional agricultural aid to help the hari, gave the

right to the hari to graze his cattle on the waste lands gave the hari a free hand for some months with the crops till the season of division arrived. Unlike the ryot elsewhere the harts in Sindh were undoubtedly far more favorably placed. The Muslim zamindar was easy going and generous to a degree, fond of the pleasures of life, lived for the day forgetful of the morrow, made an excellent master to his lazy, indolent and carefree ryots. As such he stood in deep contrast to the Hindu – cool, calculating, self-centred – was a hard task master and worked those under him to serve his interest and purpose. There was less of humanity and more of the machine in the Hindu zamindar, hence his estate was well managed and his personal fortune secure. As we have mentioned, so many times in the past, that it is the national traits that shapes a peoples destiny.

We are accustomed to speak of the marvelous development of the trade of Sindh under the British rule. At first it was difficult, to realize the commercial possibilities of Sindh when the British came to that Province. Quite a few of the pioneers of British commerce in Sindh admired the chastened and moderate tone of her merchants when they spoke of its commercial prosperity. The reference was mostly to Karachi as the natural outlet for the produce of Punjab and Northern India. Karachi was regarded as immensely important in a commercial, a political or a military point of view. In a commercial point of view it was defined as the gate of Central Asia and was likely to become to India what Liverpool was to England. The fact was that before the railways came to India, a river like the Indus gave Sindh an advantage which defied competition. The Indus had been the main channel of the commerce of Central Asia. But it presented certain serious obstacles. The navigation at its mouth was both difficult and dangerous and its current was so strong that the passage of boats upstream was incredibly slow. Accordingly as soon as Karachi became a commercial port (about the middle of the 18th century) a good deal of trade began to avoid the river and take the land route between Karachi and Shikarpur.

Shikarpur during its subjection to the Afghans had become by far greatest commercial city of Sindh. Its merchants and bankers had relation, with all principal marts of Central Asia. The caravans that came down the Bolan Pass stopped at Shikarpur where the stream of commerce divided, one branch going to Sukkur and East, or northwards, and the other to Karachi. All approaches to Shikarpur were bad, for the constantly intersected with water courses, and no bridges, or the repair of roads made traffic in camels and bullocks extremely difficult. A comparatively trifling outlay would have improved the Sindh canal and given this part of the country important water communication from the Indus to Shikarpur for at least nine months of the year.

Shikarpur being in the immediate route for the transmission, of merchandize to Khorasan, and countries to the north-west by the Bolan Pass, had with Dhera

Ghazi Khan obtained the title of one of the gates to Khorasan. Its influence was more immediately felt, however, in the banking transactions which, by means of agents, it carried on in every immediate place above the Bolan Pass from Quetta to Khelat, to Bokhara and Herat, as also in all places of mercantile importance in India. Vexatious transit and other duties on the Shikarpur route towards Khorasan had tended to turn much of its former trade, especially in European goods received from the port of Karachi, into the channel of communication to the northwest which was a far less expensive route. The British felt that if the Shikarpur trade were to be revived, they must influence the chiefs of the countries bordering the Indus to revise their imposts, suppress the marauding near the Bolan pass and thus activate the trade along the river Indus. With the absence of tolls on merchandize in transit, whether by water or land they would be sure of making a favorable market. And with the stoppage of exorbitant amount of blackmail to the predatory bands commerce would improve considerably.

The Chamber of Commerce in Bombay was attracted by the prices in the Shikarpur market where a variety of commodities came from Khairpur, Bhawalpur and the Punjab. Silk (raw), drugs, and dyes were worthy of attention. Shikarpur received from Karachi bunder, Marwar, Multan and Ludhiana, European piece goods raw silk, ivory, cochineal spices of all sorts, coarse cotton cloths, kinkobs, sugar candy, cocoanuts, metal, groceries, indigo, opium, saffron and dyes of all sorts; from Kutch, Khorasan and the north-west fruits, madder, turquoises, antimony, medicinal herbs, sulphur, alum, and gums and horses.

The Shikarpur exports via the Bolan pass left for Khorasan and Kutch, They consisted of indigo (the most important) henna metals of all kinds, coarse and fine cloths, silk, groceries and spices, raw cotton, raw sugar, opium, hemp, seeds, shields, embroidered horse clothes, dry grains. The influence of the British Government and the protection it afforded to trade in these countries had their effect at Shikarpur in increasing its revenue and the settlement of influential traders from various cities of India. These details of commodities give a picture of commercial activity on and after the British advent.

Before the British conquest Lieutenant Postans reported that the revenue derived by the Mirs from the trade of Shikarpur amounted to Rs. 54,736. But in Bombay it was supposed that the only obstacle to the flow of the commerce of Asia up and down the Indus was the barbaric narrow mindedness of the Mirs and accordingly some of the earliest treaties with them were directed to opening up the navigation of the river. Naturally, when Sindh fell to the British, the Indus immediately received attention as the best highway for commercial prosperity, said Sir Charles Napier: "if any civilized man were asked, if you were ruler of Scinde what would you do? His answer would be I would abolish the tolls on the

river, make Kurrachee a free port, protect Shikarpur from robbers, make Sukkur a mart for trade, etc., on the Indus. I would make a track – way along its banks. I would get steam boats”. The idea of steamboats developed into steam trains i. e. strong tugs towing trains. But the mouth of the Indus proved quite impracticable and the scheme was soon abandoned.

To stimulate trade Sir Bartle Frere started his experiment of fairs. The first was held at Karachi in December 1852 and is said to have brought together a great and picturesque crowd of dealer in all manner of wares from all parts of India, Baluchistan, Afghanistan and Persia. They continued to flourish for some years. But all these devices were swept aside forever by the opening of the Indus Valley Railway from Kotri to Khanpur. At once the Indus ceased to be a channel of commerce and trade by road withered away. The trade of Shikarpur was not worth registering and no account was taken of the traffic on the Indus, excepting of inconsiderable quantities of a few simple commodities which came down from the Punjab by water to take rail at Shikarpur or Kotri. The commercial heart of Sindh, the Punjab and United Provinces and British Baluchistan was Karachi and the North Western and Jodhpur Bikaner Railway were the arteries and veins. The maritime and rail borne trade were separately registered at the Karachi Custom House, which published annual volumes for sale to the public, exhibiting them under various aspects with much fullness of detail. It is, therefore, unnecessary to take up space with statistic here, but a brief sketch of the progress and character of the trade of Sindh may be interesting.

For the moment let us go back to the early trade in Sindh when the British came. The imports across the land frontier of Sindh amounted during the year 1951-52 to Rs. 23,82,446. Through Shikarpur Collectorate Rs. 10,88,711; Hyderabad Rs. 3,60,426; through Karachi Rs. 8,40,871 and through Thar, and Parkar Rs. 92,438. The principal articles imported during this period were wool, sheep, horses, raw cotton, ghi, cotton and woollen piece goods, dyes and drugs, grain and seeds, fruit, treasure and other articles. Of which wool and sheep were worth Rs. 6,67,227 and next came dyes, drugs, grain and seeds which totaled Rs. 6,73,319. The exports during the same year (185152) amounted to Rs. 17,85,418 consisting of piece goods, metals, grain, ghi and other sundry articles. This was land trade.

Turning to Karachi the harbour was formed by numerous streams and torrents that descended from the adjacent hills in the rainy season, which flowing from every direction towards that part of the sea coast where the land was lowest had cut at their juncture a deep bay or inlet. It was nearly five miles long, and, including the lagoons and swamps of the upper part, extended in a east and west line for a distance of ten miles, not above fourth, however, of this space afforded anchorage for vessels of any size, the remainder being occupied by extensive mud flats, or choked with shoals that were partially dry at low tides. The large

trading boats that frequented Karachi, were not able to approach the town nearer on account of the shallowness of the water, always anchored off it and discharged their cargoes into small boats called doondees; and for this purpose as well as for other conveniences it afforded, it was by far the best spot in the harbour This describes what was to develop into the important Karachi port later under the British.

Shortly before the occupation of Sindh Karachi was described as a large and populous town called Kurruck from which the name was derived<sup>85</sup>. The town of Karachi was built upon a slightly elevated piece of ground, which projected a short distance into the swamp and flats on the eastern side of the harbour; It occupied rather a large space and was defended by a new wall, with round towers at each angle, and along the sides. The fortifications were of the meanest type in a dilapidated state most of the towers were heaps of dust and the walls breached in so many places that the inhabitants used them as convenient places of ingress and egress. The guns mounted on the bastion were of a small calibre and useless from age.

Like most native cities, the space inside was completely filled up by houses, the streets so narrow that two horsemen could hardly pass each other in the principal thoroughfares. Outside the suburbs on two sides extended from the walls to some distance, and contained almost as many houses as the town itself. It had a population of 14,000 souls, half of which were Hindus, and the rest Baluchis, Jokeahs, Nowanas and Jaths. Of the population no correct calculation could be formed, as neither house nor poll-taxes were levied. The houses were flat-roofed and built of mud, mixed up with a large quantity of chopped grass, plastered over a frame work of wood. Some were two or three storied high but the generality not more than one; a few only had a coating of chunam on the roof the very slight monsoon rendered such an expense almost unnecessary; but all had ventilators open to the westward. The suburbs had many poor people from the hills who worked as labourers and water-carriers.

Many of the Hindu merchants possessed great wealth, and, as a body, they were more independent and possessed greater influence, than in any other part of Sindh. This arose from the desire of the rulers to increase the trade of the port, and encourage those who, in the course of their mercantile pursuits, contributed so largely to the revenue of the country. The Mowanas and Jaths were employed

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<sup>85</sup> For nearly a century and a half the port of Karachi has been the gate of foreign commerce not only for Sind, but for a large area of north-west India, Baluchistan and Afghanistan. It belonged for a time to the Khan of Kelat, but was taken from him in 1795 by the Mirs of Sind, who recognizes its importance and built a fort on the headland of Manora to protect the entrance to the harbour. They also extended a tolerance and even favour to the Hindu merchants on whom the prosperity of the port depended which was foreign to the general spirit of their rule elsewhere. *Gazetteer p. 368.*



chiefly in the fisheries, or as artificers; and the Baluchis, who were not numerous, were in the service of different chiefs as military followers. The Jokeahs and Jakrias inhabited the mountains to the northwards, and there were but few residents in the town. The tribes boasted a descent from the Sumra Rajputs who formerly ruled in Sindh, and it was said, could bring 1,500 to 2,000 men in to the field. They were a branch of the large Numree tribes, which occupied the Province of Lus, and parts of Baluchistan, and previous to the conquest of Karachi by the Sindhis, acknowledged the authority of the Jam of Beyh; but since that period they had been subject to the Amirs.

Ever since the conquest of Karachi by the Amirs, it was exempted from many of those heavy exactions which pressed so hard on the inhabitants of other cities under their rule a fact to be attributed to its distance from the seat of Government, its important position as a port, and the influence possessed by the large body of Hindu merchants, who as mentioned already, contributed so much to its prosperity. That they should be allowed any sway under the rule of so bigoted a Government seemed indeed surprising; but when it was stated that no revenue, whatever was derived from the soil, the necessity of conciliating traders of whatever community or tribe at this port was clearly apparent. The amount thus realized from Karachi was the produce of the land and sea customs, there was little or no revenue from the soil. It was surprising that such an extent of country should yield little or nothing. But surprise would cease when it was known that the cultivator only realized one-fourth of the profit of his field the balance was seized by the Amir, and their karbaries. There was no necessity to doubt these, conditions for a native remarked to an officer: "you think us idle and careless but were it not for this excessive taxation the appearance of the country here would be very different." It is, indeed, surprising that this ruinous proceedings were not apparent to the rulers of the country.

Let us now turn to the revenue from the port of Karachi, and the nature of the trade and types of commodities traded in etc. For a long period Karachi was considered a place of much importance on account of the trade it possessed and the large revenue derived.<sup>86</sup> Once it belonged to the Jam of Lus, from whom it

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<sup>86</sup> A detailed report of the trade of Karachi in 183S by Commander Careless of the Indian Navy furnishes some particulars of much interest. The value of the whole trade for that year was estimated at Rs. 21,46,625 the most important items in the list of imports being China & Bengal silks, English broad cloth, common English shawls and cotton piece goods of many kinds, both white & coloured all brought from Bombay to the aggregate value of Rs. 6,00,000, sugar from Bengal, China, Manila, Batavia and Malbar aggregated nearly Rs. 90,000. Pepper (Rs. 48,750 ), copper (Rs. 54,000), ivory (Rs. 60,000) and English cloth yarn (Rs. 20,000) are other items from Bombay. Guzerat sent cotton valued at Rs. 31,500. From the Persian Gulf the principal imports were dates, pearls and slaves.. No grain of any kind appears among the imports but the exports already include Rs. 67,000 worth of wheat. One of the most valuable items of export trade was opium brought from Marwar to Tatta and sent to Damaun on account of the heavy British duty at Bombay. The other export worth notice are ghi indigo madder, wool raisin and salted fish... Commander Careless valued the trade at not more than Rs. 1,50,000. *Gazetteer p. 368, 369*

was taken by the Baluchi Chiefs soon after they conquered Sindh. Aware of the value of their acquisition, they erected forts at the mouth of the harbour, to defend it and did every thing in their power to encourage and increase the commerce of the port. Formerly, it was the practice of merchants throughout Sindh to import goods at ports where the duties were more moderate. This was strictly forbidden by the Amirs, under the severest penalties; and the merchants being obliged to import everything into Karachi, the revenue and trade occurring from it increased considerably in consequence.

The duty levied on all imports was 4 percent on landing, and, with the exception of silk piece goods and copper, and an additional 2 ½ percent when the goods left the town to be forwarded to Upper Sindh. The latter was also the duty on all exports, which were also charged 1 percent on being brought into the town. There was besides, a further duty of Rs. 3 on every 1,800 lbs of goods exported and imported. In 1809, the revenue derived from customs was Rs. 99,000 but over the years it now averaged annually above Rs 1,50,000. Some years it fell short of that sum, but at others it was considerably greater. This fluctuation arose from the greater or less quantity of opium brought from Marwar, to be shipped at the port. In some seasons it amounted to 1,500 camel-loads but at others to not more than 80 loads. Taking in consideration all the duties etc. levied, as stated above, the revenue collected in 1837 amounted to Rs. 1,73,893.

Imports from Bombay *viz.*, sugar, pepper, copper, silk, ivory, English cotton yarn etc., were worth Rs. 5,44,750; the Persian Gulf sent goods worth Rs. 2,95,000; Upper Sindh contributed Rs. 4,600 and Lus gave in oil cakes alone Rs. 19,500, hence the total value of imports came to Rs. 9,01,350. The largest items of export were ghi and indigo, the former was worth Rs. 1,70,000 and the latter Rs. 1,20,000. Taking into account articles like wool, madder, raisin, wheat and salt fish, cod-sound and shark – fines it totalled Rs. 4,99,500.

A more detailed picture of exports and imports under the Araks in 1837 gives us the following details. About five or six years earlier 15,000 maunds of cotton came annually from Kutch and Guzerat but it had since been cultivated with such success in Sindh that only 2,500 maunds was required. Wheat and jowori were also imported from Guzerat. The trade in African slaves was about a 150 annually reached in 1837 the figure 1,500 brought from Muscat and the African coast. Pearls from the Persian Gulf were in great demand. Pearl oysters were found at Piltee or the western mouth of the Indus but were of such poor quality that they ceased to attract attention. The value of silk, piece goods etc., imported annually was estimated at Rs, 6,00,000. Surat Kinkabs to the value of about Rs. 20,000 found a ready sale. Opium from Marwar paid in transit duty Rs. 130 per load; the average received was about 500 camel-loads but it sometimes reached about 1000 to 1500 camel-loads also. The value of the precious stones (diamonds,

emeralds, rubies, amethysts etc.) brought from the upper provinces and Persia was not known, as they were conveyed privately; but it was supposed to be considerable. The greater part the best were sent to Bombay and Bengal the less valuable disposed off in Sindh. The districts of Shikarpur, Bhawalpur and Karachi received annually 1,600 maunds of indigo, which was exported to Bombay and the Persian Gulf.

Nearly the whole of the goods imported into Karachi were consumed in Sindh, the value of those sent to the northern Provinces of India consisted chiefly of piece goods, with a small quantity of steel, sugar and spices seldom exceeded as previously stated, Rs. 1,50,000. Most of this trade was in the hands of the Pathan merchants, who, it was said, from their knowledge of the country and inhabitants were able to carry it on with less loss than others. The commodities consumed in Sindh went by land to Bunder Garah, Tatta, Hyderabad, Sehwan, Shikarpur and Khairpur. The caravans reached Tatta in three days, Hyderabad in six, Sehwan in thirteen, Khairpur in twenty and Shikarpur in twenty-five. The duties levied at these places varied in amount, but were frequently evaded, especially by the rich merchants, who had relations and friends connected with the Court. This was a distinct disadvantage to the poorer merchants who paid the entire duty. This practice appears to have prevailed throughout Sindh. Karachi from its peculiar local advantages, was undoubtedly the best port, the harbour was well protected from all winds, and accessible for vessels drawing fourteen or fifteen feet throughout the year.

We may now turn to places of lesser importance than Shikarpur and Karachi visited by British officers a few years prior to the occupation of Sindh by the British. What we have given so far is a picture of commercial conditions under the Amirs. Whatever was done was not so much for the betterment of the people or place but to enhance the revenue. The native Government of Sindh was typical of selfish motives as any other Government in India. The economy being agricultural there is little to mention on urban development. Towns were few and far between, communications were fair weather tracks, industries hardly worth the name and in modern language the entire scene economically underdeveloped. The industrial revolution in the West had changed the face of European countries from the urban point of view and created a cry for markets and raw materials which the east alone could provide. And the east became the victim of western greed.

Tatta was one of the most flourishing of oriental emporia; and the alluvial and inundated country, in its vicinity was kept in the highest state of cultivation. It was at that time famous for its manufacture of cloth and employed about 40,000 weavers. Consequent on the fall of the Moghul dynasty Sindh captured by the Baluchis an apathy set in which eventually ruined the town. It was soon without

walls and unprotected showing an air of meanness with nothing of its past glory. The streets were narrow with occasional maunds of accumulated filth found at all corners and turnings of the street. A few Bania's shops were interspersed here and there in the town and wherever a wider street than usual occurred, it was converted into a small market-place for the sale of fish and fruit, vegetables, fire wood etc. No regular bazar existed, unless an open street in which shops were more numerous than elsewhere and whose width made it possible to expose for sale articles brought from the surrounding country, could be called by that name. The principal commodities sold were flour, grains, tobacco, dried dates, sugar etc. Shops with wearing apparel, cloth etc., were rarely met with. The manufactures of Tatta were more skilful than those of any other place in Sindh. The loongis, made of silk and cotton, interwoven with gold thread, were of exquisite beauty and workmanship; the chintzes were much superior to those in India, both in texture and pattern; the fine cloths were almost equal to those of Surat; but the dangaris were of an inferior quality.

A few houses in Tatta were built with ground and upper apartments; the greater number were one-storied. Almost all the old houses were built of burnt bricks, but the modern ones of wood and mud, raised on a foundation of burnt bricks, or stone, built several feet high a preventive against damp during the time of inundation. Most of these old houses were rapidly decaying and their bricks were being used to build new ones. The number of inhabited houses were 2,550, while 1,900 were uninhabited and fast decaying gave Tatta a miserable appearance.

The total population was about 11,400 of which 5000 were Mohemmedan and 6,400 Hindus. The Hindu Baniyas were possessed of considerable wealth. But the character of the people could be well described, said the British visitor, in the words of Hippocrates: "You will almost always find the forms of men and the nature of the place corresponding: for where the soil is rich and soft, and wet, and of uniform temperature, the people are gross, lymphatic, and of relaxed joints; intolerant of toil and cowards; indolent and sleepy; they are neither keen nor subtle but dull in arts."

But even in such a world a wise and good Government would not only raise the inhabitants in the scale of human beings but enrich the country in the language of a well known writer: "the face of nature to smile around them, giving them the never failing reward of sound policy and Christian benevolence". But at the moment supplies of every description were in Lower Sindh most deficient, resources of Tatta had never been tapped sufficiently beyond their supplying a bare subsistence to the inhabitants; but now under the British it was expected that within a year or two the physical blessings of a wise Government would soon be felt. Another task which the Government of Sindh had was to save the

people from the polluted air, soil and water of its ill-constructed cities. For there were a catalogue of diseases which had their origin more from the present condition of the people than from climate itself. It was a well known saying in Sindh that "Sindh is exempt from no disease that flesh is heir to". For if the streets of her towns were exposed to the animal and human filth, her houses ill-ventilated and the greatest mass of people in the smallest possible space, one could well imagine the conditions prevailing in the midst of this squalor, poverty and disease. For this was the condition of all towns before and even after the British left. The British segregated themselves in cantonments, which was a world of their own, closed their eyes and turned their backs to the poverty of India. Even, today, after twenty seven years of independence, we might use the world slum for our cities which truly occupy more than one third the area and two thirds the population of our towns. The prevailing conditions, from all points of view, are simply appalling where cities are concerned.

A port of lesser importance than Karachi on the advent of the British was Sonmeeanee. It was known to the Europeans as a direct route to Khorasan and Afghanistan. The port was open to the wind and was so narrow that heavy vessels could not enter it. The anchorage for all vessels was at a distance of two miles from the town. The territory was under the rule of the Jam. The main items of revenue were the custom duties on the imports and exports of Sonmeeanee. The port contained upwards of 200 houses, built, as usual of wattle and mud; and the number of inhabitants was about 1,000 families. Most of them made a living by transporting merchandize to the north and some were fishermen.

The Hindu portion of the population did not exceed 300; they were agents of trades, artisans and shop keepers. The total, revenue was about Rs. 45,000 per annum. Some came from cultivation the rest from the customs collected at the port. The custom duties were less than those at Karachi and we remember the Amirs forbade the use of this port to merchants in Karachi. The principal imports were cloth and metals from Bombay sent north; dates from Mukran; rice from Sindh for internal consumption. Slaves were brought from Muscat mostly on private order. The exports were wool, wheat, ghi, moong and horses from Khorasan. The last were brought in very large numbers and were of a superior quality than those supplied from Karachi. The shops in the port were about fifteen only and sold grain and dates. The weavers manufactured silk and coarse cotton cloth. Indigo was imported in large quantity and was used by dyers to colour clothes. Kabul sent for export madder, saffron, raisins, almonds and dried fruits of different kinds. The port also exported English broadcloth, chintzes, muslins, tin, iron, steel, pepper etc., to Bombay. The Pathan merchants had considerable investments in the produce of the country which they exchanged against European manufacture. A duty of 4 percent was levied on all imports and exports, in addition a transit duty of one rupee was also collected. This duty

was decreased and the port attracted more trade so that all merchants were anxious to adopt this safer and less expensive route. It was expected by Afghan merchants that the circuitous route to Karachi, Sehwan etc., would be given up for Sonmееanee. It was already estimated that within the last two years, the value of import trade had increased by Rs. 3,00,000. The returns from trade at the Port between 1st September 1840 to 31st May 1841 came to Rs. 9,91,773. Imports and exports from Bombay on 1st June 1841 were Rs. 5,48,948 and Rs. 7,67,344 respectively.

Such was the trade and towns under the Mirs as gathered from the accounts of early British officers. The vital change effected by the introduction of the railways had changed the internal economy of the Province. And the growth and development of the port of Karachi gave a great impetus to the maritime trade of Sindh. The effect of these changes may best be told in Mr. Dalzell's report on the Administration of the Customs Department in Sindh for the year 1863-64: "It is now upwards of twenty years since the Province of Sindh became an integral portion of the British Empire in the East. At that period the value of its trade was Rs. 12,21,600 in 1847-48 five years thereafter it rose to Rs. 44,26,000 in five years more to Rs. 80,00,000 in the succeeding five to Rs. 2,15,92,000; and in the five years ending with the official year just closed it has reached the enormous total value of Rs. 6,66,28,106". This was due partly to a temporary cause, *viz.*, the American Civil war which had also affected the economy of Western India so favorably. But in Sindh, as elsewhere, it was only momentary; for the very next year the trade of Karachi fell by the amount of Rs. 1,41,80,956 and it never recovered its former level until Sindh was directly connected with the Punjab by rail in 1878.

We may now turn to trade in the desert region of Thar and Parkar on the advent of the British. Transit duties were abolished throughout Sindh at the conquest; the Parkar Chiefs stood to lose their revenue were given half of the frontier duties. The town and frontier duties were thus, from the year 1844, when Thar and Parkar were placed under Kutch, till August 1848, collected by a Government Kardar, one-half was regularly paid to the Chief and the remaining to Government. But on 1st August 1848 a revised system of customs was introduced and the landed proprietors were promised some compensation for their loss of frontier duties. The average annual sum for the years 1845, 1846 and 1847 was taken as the amount for compensation; it amounted to Rs. 5,463 and this was the compensation paid annually ever since. The removal of the harassing custom duties led to increase in trade; it also afforded great relief to the inhabitants in years of security by allowing the male to leave his family at home while he went to work in a neighbouring place where grain was cheap.

In 1852 the land frontier duties in Sindh were abolished. This led to a free interchange of produce and products of Sindh with other countries. The rapidly increasing prosperity of the people was, besides, due to the security of person and property under the British rule. Hence it tended to increase the desire of accumulation of wealth and to stimulate individuals to exertion which nothing but a feeling of security alone could do. As far as Thar and Parkar were concerned the measure cheapened and actually brought a variety of articles, within the reach of a class of people who, previously were unable to enjoy them. Some of these were of British manufacture and gave a stimulus to British trade. To possess these articles, which at one time were regarded a luxury, gradually became a necessity and this had a far reaching effect on the exertion of the people. To come by these commodities the people must either extend the sphere of their labours or improve whatever their manufacture so as to satisfy their need for such imported articles. This would tend to develop the resources of the country and advance a civilized society.

The chief import into Thar and Parkar was cotton which came from Kutch and Guzerat. Molasses (Gur) was also imported from Guzerat and Kutch to the extent required for internal consumption, cotton was exported to different parts of Sindh but not gur which was largely found all over the Province. Thar had a salt lake capable of exporting large quantities of good quality salt. In 1844-45, 21,074 Indian maunds were exported from the Moke Salt Lake for such was its name; while in the following season 60,928 Indian Maunds were exported. The duty levied on it, however, was trifling, being at the rate of Rs. 25i per 100 bullock load or about two annas per Indian maund. Though the Marwaris were willing to pay about 7 as per Indian maund if allowed to export it their offer was refused. It was felt that the export of salt at such a small rate of duty would interfere with the general revenue derived from the salt monopoly.

The fluctuations in the fortunes of trade prior to the Civil War in America show that the value of sea borne trade during the year 1861-62 had been Rs. 2,96,65,543 being an increase on that of 1860-61 by Rs. 28,29,044 or nearly 10 ½ percent. The value of import trade had decreased by Rs. 1,85,507, or 1f percent. The imports of cotton piece goods from England showed an increase of Rs. 4,21,112; coal and coke Rs. 1,49,224; raw and manufactured metals Rs. 78,417. But in the export trade there was an increase of Rs. 34,03,774. The articles in which this increase had chiefly taken place were salt, wood, cotton, indigo and hides. The indigo trade had made great advance, there was an increase of 206 percent in the export of this article. The years 1860-61 and 1861-62 were the first years in which it had been exported to England. Wool again was the chief staple for export. It was brought chiefly from Baluchistan and Afghanistan. The value of this article exported in 1861-62 was Rs. 51,71,025 it was an increase of 58% over the year 1860-61.

An increase in the exports to U. K. had taken place in the following items :

Articles	1860-61	1861-62	Increase
	Rs.	Rs.	
Indigo	****	1,72,499	1,72,499
Cotton	81,560	3,84,272	3,02,712
Wool	70,242	1,00,760	30,518
Hides and Skins	4,495	41,864	37,369

The custom receipts amounted to Rs. 4,03,433 on imports and Rs. 1,10,455 on exports showing an increase in the former of Rs. 59,010 but a decrease in the latter of Rs. 60,974.

This decrease being due to diminished exports of grain to Kutch, Muscat and Kathiawar, and of grain and oil seeds to U. K. Under the head of salt excise there had been an increase of Rs. 73,896, The total quantity exported was 5,83,848 maunds.

The sea borne trade of Sindh declined. The imports and exports were:

1863-64	Rs. 2,47,47,372	Rs. 4,18,80,743
1864-65	Rs. 2,31,67,000	Rs. 2,92,80,150
Decrease	15,80,372	1,26,00,593

This decline was mostly due to the fall in railway material because of the completion of the Punjab railway; besides there was also a falling of in coal, coke and malt liquor. On the other hand there was an increase in imports of articles which showed the growing wealth of the Province and extension of internal, trade:

Cotton goods	Rs. 7,33,370
Machinery	Rs. 2,44,468
Metals	Rs. 55,745
Oilman's stores	Rs. 33,525
Book and Stationery	Rs. 19,144
Apparel	Rs. 16,929

The table exhibits a summary of the principal imports which increased and decreased during the past year (1864-65) and the port whence received.



It will thus be seen that the import trade with Calcutta, the Kokan, Madras and Rangoon had increased in every item; that with regard to Guzerat, Malobar Mekran and the Persian Gulf Ports the increases show a large margin over the decreases, and that only with America, Bombay, Kutch. Goa and United Kingdom do the decreases exceed increases. The American war and the scarcity in Kutch sufficiently account for the falling off" in this respect.

The export trade of Sindh decreased by 83 percent attributed to the diminished export of cotton in 1864-65:

1863-64	Rs. 4,18,80,734
1864-65	Rs. 2,92,80,150
Decrease	Rs. 1,26,00,584

It was satisfactory to observe that while the exports of cotton had fallen, the direct shipment of this material to English and French ports increased by 70 ½ percent in quantity and 79 percent in value during the past year; hence the direct trade with Europe showed an increase. The reduction was in exports to Bombay; and as Sindh and Punjab cotton was generally sent to Bombay for the purpose of being mixed with cotton of superior quality the falling off in this branch of trade was perhaps rather a subject for congratulation than regret. Concurrent with a reduction in cotton export there was an increased exportation of wool, dyes, hides, ghi, saltfish, saltpetre, silk and other staple products of Sindh and the adjacent countries. The custom revenue was Rs. 3,41,674 and compared with that for 1863-64 exhibited a decrease of Rs. 1,05,401. The import duties also fell by Rs. 10,052 and the decline would have been greater but for the enhanced duties fixed by Government on 20th April 1864.

By 1865-66 the value of the whole sea borne trade decreased to the extent of Rs. 43,23,705.

Year	Imports	Exports
	Rs.	Rs.
1864-65	2,31,67,000	2,92,80,150
1865-66	2,01,95,509	2,79,27,936
Decrease	29,71,491	13,52,214

Two-thirds of this decrease was due to fall in the value of cotton rate than that exported in 1864-65. This decrease, however, said the Administrative Report, was not to be taken as a sign of falling off in the external trade of the Province. On the contrary in cotton alone the trade had increased. The quantity exported was in excess of that of the previous year by 44,00,802 in direct shipments to England. Hence there was an increase of 40 percent over the previous year. The trade in

wool, too, showed improvement, as the export during the year 1865-66 exceeded those in 1864-65 by 10,676 cwts. In 1866-67 the whole of the external trade, only for eleven months, was Rs, 4,97,91,138 showing an increase of Rs. 16,67,693 over the value of trade in 1865-66. It yielded a revenue to the custom of Rs. 3,81,210 being and increase of Rs. 18,394. The next year 1868-69 the external trade fetched Rs. 4,25,70,306 being Rs. 24,41,302 less than the previous year. The custom duty amounted to Rs. 5,13,416 which showed an increase of Rs. 38,095.

	Realization		Increase
	1867-68	1868-69	
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Import Duty	3,02,843	3,26,625	23,782
Export Duty	1,72,478	1,86,791	14,313
Total	4,75,321	5,13,416	38,093

This increase was due to large import of cotton piece goods; direct from the United Kingdom as also large exports in oil seeds. The salt trade in Sindh which had been stagnant for quite a few years was revived and a considerable quantity of salt was exported to Calcutta and British Burma in consequence of the removal of the excise duty of 8 annas a maund formerly levied in Sindh, and the grant of leases of the salt pans at Seergoonda for a period of 2 years free of all assessment. Sindh had for the first time, commenced trading in cotton with Amesterdamm already 4,70,00 lbs of the value of Rs. 1,50,000 had been exported, and a considerable quantity more was being shipped for that port.

At the close of the decade 1869-70 the sea borne trade in imports and exports fell by Rs. 9,92,867 and the custom duties also showed a decrease by Rs. 65,344 as compared with the previous year. The decrease was due to a fall in imports of cotton piece goods from England, and to the revision of import tariff values under Act XII of 1869. Besides, the stoppage of the export of grain to foreign ports and a diminution in the export of oil seeds to England and France. In spite of the stoppage of grain export we learn that grain was imported from the Persian Gulf to the extent of 201,834 cwt., valuing Rs. 7,94,480. Though the export duty showed a fall of Rs. 47,520 the total value of the export trade exceeded that of 1868-69 by Rs. 2,62,673. This was accounted for by large exports of cotton to China and of indigo to England and Bombay. The exports in salt showed an improvement by sending out 3,6971 tons valued at Rs. 46,300. Tea to the value of Rs. 1,50,000 was sent from Karachi by the hill route to Khandhar, Khorasan and Khelat.

At the opening of the new decade (1870-80) the gross custom revenue for the year 1870-71 was Rs. 3,50,474. There was a decrease in import duty due to falling off of cotton goods, wines and spirits, iron and steel and also in a small degree to

the alteration of the Tariff by Act XVII of 1870 which came into force in April, the first month of the official year. There was also a fall of Rs. 40,023 on export duty. Sindh cotton and wool had reached such foreign markets as England, France, Holland, Genoa, Trieste, Venice, Hong Kong, Bombay and other ports. In the years 1869-70 and 1870-71 the quantity exported was 21,539,639 and 24,519,383 lbs. valued at Rs. 75,19,180 and Rs. 83,01,551 respectively. The trade had increased by Rs.18,84,621 by 1870-70. During the 12 months ending March 31st 1871 the Sindh Railway brought down 302,614 maunds or 24,209,120 lbs of cotton. The following statement shows the exportation of wool for the years 1869-70 and 1870-71. The export to France and Hong King are not worth notice.

Countries	1869-70		1870-71	
	Quantity	Value	Quantity	Value
	Lbs	Rs.	Lbs.	Rs.
England	3,212,012	13,09,921	2,062,104	8,10,865
Bombay	7,354,660	16,84,576	14,215,754	31,84,343
The declared value of the whole trade in 1872-73 and 1873-74 was the following :				
<b>Imports</b>	<b>1873-74</b>	<b>1872-73</b>	<b>Increase in 1873-74</b>	<b>Decrease in 1873-74</b>
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Merchandize	1,50,68,479	1,63,27,363	•••	12,58,864
State Railway material	17,38,334	74,924	16,63,410	•••
Treasure	4,68,597	3,71,708	96,889	•••
Total Imports	1,72,75,410	1,67,73,995	17,60,299	•••
<b>Exports</b>				
Merchandize	2,12,89,660	1,98,25,767	14,63,893	•••
Treasure	10,69,778	89,795	9,79,980	•••
Total Exports	2,23,59,438	1,99,15,565	24,43,873	•••
Total merchandize	3,63,58,139	3,61,53,130	2,05,009	•••
State Railway material	17,38,334	74,924	16,63,410	•••
Treasure	15,38,375	4,61,503	10,76,869	•••
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>3,96,34,848</b>	<b>3,66,89,567</b>	<b>29,45,288</b>	<b>•••</b>

<i>Value of Imports with England, Persian Gulf &amp; Bombay (1872-73 &amp; 1873-74)</i>							
Imports							
Ports	Merchandize	Treasure	Total	Merchandize	Treasure	Total	Increase or Decrease
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
England	38,29,337	•••	38,29,337	25,95,585	•••	25,95,585	+12,33,757
Persian Gulf	4,58,640	33,901	4,92,541	5,20,070	8,772	6,70,790	-1,15,249
Bombay	1,14,74,170	3,82,612	1,18,56,782	1,25,13,263	2,17,172	1,27,30,435	-8,73,653
Exports*							
England	85,98,058	830	85,98,888	42,65,888	•••	42,65,088	+43,33,800
Persian Gulf	5,01,186	1,25,775	6,26,961	4,55,919	53,096	5,09,015	+1,17,946
Bombay	76,14,540	9,37,173	85,51,713	1,01,48,813	16,202	1,10,65,015	-16,13,302

\* There were no imports but exports to Hongkong which showed an increase of Rs. 2,75,415. The increase was of 2 lakhs; 1873-74 Merchandize Rs. 14,97,620 over 1872-73 Rs. 12,22,205.

It was observed that while most of the trade and particularly import trade, took place with Bombay, a considerable trade was carried on direct with England and other places in Europe and the Persian Gulf as well as with other parts of India.

The total number and tonnage of sailing vessels and steamers entered and cleared at the ports in Sindh during the year 1873-74. Compared with those of the preceding year they were as follows:

Year	Entered		Cleared	
	No.	Tonnage	No.	Tonnage
1872-73	2,194	1,70,194 ½	2,213	17307 ¾
1873-74	1,484	1,77,197 ¼	1,503	1,77,755

Thus the total number of vessels entered and cleared in 1873-74 fell off by 710 each, which was owing to the smaller number of native craft trading to and from the port of Sindh. The tonnage was in excess of the preceding year by 7,003k tons in arrivals and 4,6811 tons in departures.

The increase was due to the greater number of steamers of larger burthen trading with Karachi via the Suez Canal and to the running of bi-weekly mail steamers between Karachi and Bombay for 81 months of the year instead of one week by mail steamer.<sup>87</sup> The increase was entirely in wheat shipped and dispatched by

<sup>87</sup> Up to 1851 only a single English sailing ship had entered the harbour and there was not another for several years. Small steamers came and went but until the Suez Canal was opened (1869) steamers played but a small part in the commerce of India with Europe. In 1854-55, however, the harbour entrance had been so far improved that ten sailing ship, entered and in 1859 the Collector of Customs reported, with pride, that vessels drawing 194 feet of water had entered with safety, and that as many 25 ranging from 500 to 1000 tons, had been "at one and the same time accommodated in the port, all of them swinging to their anchor". In 1863-64 the wonderful year of prosperity, 156 square ringed ships and steamers, aggregating a tonnage of 74,251, entered the harbour, of which 71 came from foreign ports and 84 from India. Of the

steamers through the Suez Canal. The shipment of this product in 1873-74 was the highest on record and exceeded in value the total exports of wheat during the preceding five years by Rs 1,652,161 and the exports of the preceding year by Rs. 28,58,932. The following figures exhibit the number and tonnage of steamers running via the Suez Canal entered and cleared at Karachi during the past two years:

Year	Entered		Cleared	
	No.	Tonnage	No.	Tonnage
1873-74	10	8,301 ½	33	29,671
1872-73	5	4,390	6	5.39
Increase	5	3,911 ½	27	24,281

For the same year the internal trade of Sindh, the only fact: worth recording are that in Thar and Parkar there was a considerable trade in bullocks, ghi, raw hides and bajri; that grain was sent in larger quantities to Marwar and that arrangements for rendering Narra, Mitran and Thar canals available for navigation were under consideration. The principal exports from Upper Sindh Frontier were wheat, linseed, wool and skins: 1,20,000, maunds of wheat were sent to Karachi during 1873-74.

In 1874-75 the exports and imports fetched;				
	1874-75	1873-74	Increase 1874-75	Decrease 1874-75
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Total of imports	2,06,39,300	1,81,46,662	31,52,740	6,60,102
Total of exports	1,85,25,010	2,23,81,938	7,28,996	45,85,924
Total imports & exports	3,91,64,310	4,05,28,600	13,16,494	26,80,784

Of the three ports in Sindh, Karachi, Keti and Seergonda the first absorbs nearly the entire trade. Imports from the foreign ports exceeded those of 1873.74 by Rs. 83,531 and from British ports in other Presidencies it exceeded by Rs. 10,11,534. Imports to the Persian Gulf rose by Rs. 62,630 due to increased shipment of wheat and barley. There was also an increase from Bombay by 12 lakhs in metal. Of the whole import trade piece goods take up 44 percent; and metals are next in importance taking up 9 percent. There was this year no business with Australia and British Burma. To foreign countries export trade for 1874-75 fell short by 15½

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former 47 flew British colours, 7 French, 6 American, 3 Russian and 8 Portuguese. Germany had not looked in yet. The 84 vessels from Indian ports included steamers of the B.I.S. XI Co., which had begun to Busrah every month or six weeks “. Gazetteer p. 371

lakhs owing to a fall in wheat export to England. Turning to the principal article of export, raw cotton, it was exported to the value of Rs 35,80,947 but less by two lakhs due to fall of export to U. K., Bombay and China. This was the smallest value exported during the last ten years. The export of indigo continued to decline and fell from a value of 27 lakhs in 1869-70 to a little less than 5½ lakhs in 1874-75.

<i>Contrasted Statement* showing the declared value of exports and re-exports for 1873-74 &amp; 1874-75</i>				
	1874-75	1873-74	Increase	Decrease
<b>Articles</b>	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Cotton piece goods	72,53,100	71,66,399	86,701	•••
Cocoanuts	7,27,629	6,88,546	40,883	•••
Grain & Pulses	19,29,619	51,61,008	•••	32,31,389
Jute	4,40,704	5,06,666	•••	65,962
<b>Liquors</b>				
All, Beer & Porter	1,37,717	2,08,186	•••	70,469
Spirits	5,03,434	4,73,965	29,469	•••
Wines & liquors	2,26,009	2,15,344	10,165	•••
<b>Metals</b>				
Iron	10,36,151	5,26,173	5,09,978	•••
Silk raw	2,00,111	1,60,367	39,744	•••
Sugar	8,76,435	11,59,181	•••	2,82,746
Wool raw	59,99,095	63,48,740	•••	3,49,645
Seeds	31,91,982	21,82,855	10,09,127	•••

*\*A few chosen items of trade.*

The harbour of Karachi was made available to large vessels at all seasons by the construction of a break water and deepening of the channel. It had, therefore, developed a large direct foreign and coasting trade valued in 1875-76 at 4½ millions sterling exclusive of Government stores and treasures. Both imports from and exports to foreign countries exhibited marked improvement, and exceeded the average of the preceding five years. The value of the trade in the Suez Canal during the five years ending 31st March 1876 had increased from about 40 lakhs of rupees in 1871-72 to nearly 127 ½ lakhs in 1875-76. In the former year only six canal steamers entered and only two cleared the ports; in the latter, 18 entered and 45 cleared. A new lighthouse for the harbour was still required. Sindh took a great deal of sugar and cotton piece goods from Bombay

during the year, and exported to foreign ports large quantities of raw cotton, wool, wheat and rape-seed.

The total declared value of sea-borne trade of Sindh in 1875-76 both imports and exports exclusive of Government goods showed favorable when contrasted with 1874-75, the increase being Rs 1,00,38,572 or 27.63 percent. The declared value of the total foreign and coasting trade had increased from Rs. 3,63,35,491 in 1874-75 to Rs. 4,63,74,063 in 1874-76. The following shows the value of trade for five years preceding 1875-76:

Years	Value of imports	Value of exports	Total Value of trade
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Average of 5 years	2,00,84,823	2,26,14,873	4,26,99, 696
Value of trade for 1875-76	2,39,27,079	2,66,86,100	5,06,13,179
Increase in 1875-76 over the average of 5 years	38,42,256	40,71,227	79,13,483

Due to the Suez Canal during the five years ending 1875-76 exports at each port of Sindh had increased from about 40 lakhs to 127½ lakhs. The value of import trade foreign and coasting for 1875-76 (excluding the port of Sindh) was more than in 1874-75 by 26 ⅓ lakhs. The total value of imports received from U.K. had increased by a lakh of rupees the increase being chiefly in coal and coke and brass and copper. The other countries in trade contact were Trieste, France, Italy, Mekran, Bassra and Persia. With Bombay the trade increased by 22 ⅓ lakhs owing to more cotton piece goods, jute, sugar etc. The marked feature in the export trade for 1875-76 was an increase from 108 lakhs in 1874-75 to nearly 172 lakhs in 1875-76. Inclusive of coasting trade the total increase of Rs. 73 lakhs excluding exports to ports within Sindh itself.

The increase in steamers in 1875-76 was 42 entering and 49 clearing from Sindh ports. This accounted for the large increase of trade via Suez Canal, and to the running throughout the year, of bi-weekly steamers between Karachi and Bombay, and of weekly steamers to the Persian Gulf. The larger number of country craft between Sindh and Kutch and Kaithawar were an additional incentive to coastal trade. The number and tonnage of steamers which entered and cleared via the Suez Canal were:

Year	Entered		Cleared	
	No.	Tong	No.	Tong
1874-75	19	17,421	20	19,584
1875-76	18	17,495	45	46,009

In 1882-83 the total value of exports and imports amounted to Rs. 7,07,70,838. In the customs report of that year the increase in exports which exceeded imports by 33 lakhs of rupees, was assigned chiefly to indigo, wheat other grains and seeds. The following year showed another advance of 110 ½ lakhs of rupees in the exports of Indian products, chiefly food grain and seed, which was ascribed to the progress of railways in the direction of cotton, grain and seed producing districts and to the reduction of railway of rates. From that time the trade of Karachi advanced rapidly with the extension of railways and irrigation and the improvement of the harbour. Entering the 20th century the following figures show the total value of exports and imports for the years 1900 to 1905:

Trade	1900-01	1901-02	1902-03	1903-04	1904-05
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Imports	74,696,660	108,082,992	90,478,859	96,602,101	1,248,855,189
Exports	61,110,447	124,784,033	102,491,154	153,264,219	205,789,747
Grand Total	135,807,107	232,867,025	192,970,100	249,866,320	330,674,936

These aggregate figures include the trade of the sub-ports, Keti and Sirgonda the aggregate value of which was as follows:

1900-01	1901-02	1902-03	1903-04	1904-05
Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
1,808,912	1,438,050	1,060,644	1,153,051	1,227,229

The value of imports from the United Kingdom in 1904-05 was Rs. 5,25,73,969 or two-fifths of the whole, Belgium comes next with Rs. 2,41,06,018 and Austria-Hungary next with Rs. 1,04,78,904; but these figures merely showed that the trade came from Antwerp and Trieste not that the goods were the produce of those countries. Of the exports United Kingdom took Rs. 10,26,60,935 or almost exactly half, Belgium Rs. 2,32,84,747, Germany Rs. 1,89,74,876, France Rs.1,57,73,585. The trade with Asia direct was valued at only Rs. 58,52,991 in imports and Rs. 42,87,137 in exports.

Of the 450 vessels which entered in 1904-05, 346 were British, 24, Austro-Hungarian, 9 Italians, 6 Germans, 1 French, 1 Dutch, 1 Danish, 1 Swedish, 1 Norwegian, 1 Portuguese and 59 Arab. Native crafts were not included in this statement. The interportal coast traffic was mainly carried on by them; but the coasting steamers were gradually taking away much of their business and their



doom was accelerated by the dishonesty of the tindals who frequently made away with the cargo and pretended that it was jettisoned during a storm. The number and tonnage of the native craft that visited Karachi, Kefi, Sirgonda in the years 1900-05 was as below:

1900-01		1901-02		1902-03		1903-04		1904-05	
Vessels	Tonnage	Vessels	Tonnage	Vessels	Tonnage	Vessels	Tonnage	Vessels	Tonnage
<b>Foreign</b>									
164	12,623	188	15,534	158	13,149	156	12,646	172	13,276
<b>Coasting</b>									
1,623	65,124	2,263	96,658	1,545	63,626	1,443	59,320	1,706	71,550
1,787	76,837	2,451	112,192	1,702	70,775	1,599	71,966	1,878	84,826
The following figures show the total revenue derived from custom duties during the last five years :									
1900-01		1901-02		1902-03		1903-04		1904-05	
Rs.		Rs.		Rs.		Rs.		Rs.	
36,76,458		51,81,428		33,11,342		33,88,802		40,91,3931	

From what has been said the trade of Karachi was nearly equivalent for the trade of Sindh. Few words still remain to be said about its development under the British. Geographically it touched important places in India, Persia, and Arabia. With the opening of the Suez Canal it was 6,077 miles from London. Its value enhanced considerably during the first World War (1914 -18). It was regarded by the British as "the key of Sindh and of the Indus". Hence on the occupation of Sindh, Karachi received the attention which was its due and continued to do so during the next 70 years. In 1850 the Napier Mole was projected and completed and Kiamari connected with the mainland. In 1853 a comprehensive scheme at the cost of £260,000 was introduced and eventually carried through. The depth of the water increased and the Manora Break water projecting 1500 feet began in 1869 was completed in 1878. In 1877 a sum of Rs. 10 lakhs was sanctioned for dredging. In 1880 the Harbour Board was constituted and the Merewether Ship Pier was completed in 1862. In 1886 the affairs of the Port were taken over by a Port Trust. During the next 30 years the harbour was so improved that any vessel that could pass the Suez Canal could enter into it. There were four wharfs Merewether, Erskine, James and Giles named after former Commissioners of Sindh. In all there were 17 ship berths in line, at which vessels could be discharged and loaded with ease and rapidity. There was the Manora Light House and yards and warehouses continued to grow with the progress in trade. More and more lands were claimed from the surrounding swamps and produce yards constructed for the convenience of merchants and rapidity of working.

The following figures relate to the financial year (1st April to 31st March and for every fifth year) and show how the revenue and expenditure had progressed:

Year	Revenue	Expenditure
	Rs.	Rs.
1887-88	4,63,696	5,11,137
1892-93	6,46,573	8,34,020
1897-98	9,03,922	8,97,841
1902-03	15,54,918	12,97,796
1907-08	32,04,986	26,45,278
1912-13	46,67,661	38,51,615
1916-17	46,66,847	39,93,710
1921-22	63 18,387	61,27,745

The highest revenue reached was in 1913-14 the year before the war broke out when it was nearly Rs. 50,00,000. It could thus be seen that in the 30 years the revenue had increased to ten times as much as when the Port Trust was constituted and that the heavy increase began after 1902-03.

The value of the trade of the Port for the corresponding years was as follows:

Year	Imports	Exports	Total
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
1887-88	6,18,61,331	4,08,16,877	10,26,78,208
1892-93	7,00,13,198	5,56,48,339	12,56,61,537
1897-98	8,71,07,380	7,27,20,313	15,98,27,691
1902-03	11,59,81,484	10,42 05,235	22,01,86,719
1907-08	21,66,01,881	11,14,26,339	32,80,28,220
1912-13	24,90,48,379	37,02,12,715	61,92,61,094
1916-17	20,85,97,022	28,70,92,354	49,56,89,376
1921-22	43,72,59,242	21,89,84,095	65,62,48,337

The falling off in the year 1916-17 was due to the great reduction of trade owing to War conditions.

In the earlier, years the Port debt was incurred by loans from Government. These were inherited by the Port Trust Board from the Harbour Board and were gradually reduced to Rs. 4,63,537. The complete figures are as on 1st April of each year.

Year	Outstanding Debt Rs.
1887-88	11,08,887
1892-93	24,67,641
1897-98	43,99,766
1902-03	53,77,554
1907-08	81,44,447
1912-13	1,95,68,332
1916-17	2,61,21,949
1921-22	2,55,85,896

The Board since 1887 had raised loans in the open market under the Local Authorities Loans Act and later under their own Act as since amended. The payment at maturity of all loans was fully provided for by sinking funds which were maintained, under Government audit. The position of the Trust financially was very strong. They possessed an immensely valuable property in land and material and had established a Reserve Fund.

The War (1914-18) interrupted an important scheme of extension, estimated to cost Rs. 272 lakhs. So far the work undertaken had cost £96,200 for a suction dredger with pipe link and the recovery of a portion of the site required. The scheme of more ship berths, deepening of the ship channel, making docks capable of accommodating the largest vessels visiting Eastern waters, the improvement of the harbour entrance all wanted attention. Keti Bander was of importance less as an entrance for merehandize than as an outlet for the produce of surrounding country.

Another immediate effect of the war was a severe blow owing to the failure of several Indian banks in the last quarter of 1913. On the declaration of the war, credit immediately contracted. There was a severe run of depositors of the saving banks, including the Post Office saving banks, and also a great rush of the people on the Currency Office and the treasuries in the mofussil or the exchange of currency notes for cash. Weakness of this kind, it must be admitted, was not only confined to India. The adoption of palliative measures including the provision of facilities for the exchange of notes for cash at the treasuries and the destruction of the submarine Emden soon, however, restored confidence. Nevertheless, both the internal and external trade of the Province suffered considerably, but the real cause for surprise was not the extent to which the war had interrupted trade, but the normal conditions of life in the country had been modified by it.

The depression in business due to the failure of the banks continued another year, though so far as inland trade was concerned, the commercial position was satisfactory than it was in 1914-15. The slump in cotton marked the opening months of the war disappeared and owing to the demand from Japan and

elsewhere, the price of Sindhi cotton rose to the rates which were prevailing before the war. This greatly improved the prospects of the cultivators in the cotton tracts. The Government control of wheat export trade, which was started at the time of the harvest of 1915, was relaxed during the year, although export still remained subject to certain restrictions. This measure had given general satisfaction, in as much as, it had kept the price of food stuffs within moderate limits.

Scarcity of fodder and consequent mortality in cattle which in years of good rainfall were exported in large numbers from the Desert to Guzerat and other parts of the Presidency had ceased. Keen demand for leather in Europe had of late, greatly stimulated the trade in hides and skins. Piece goods and sugar merchants made large profits, especially the former, but the majority of export and import merchants suffered from the restrictions of business caused by the dearth of freight steamers. Credit was restricted though it improved somewhat at the close of 1914-15. In 1916-17 Japanese goods were replacing German and Austrian articles. Owing to the abundance of fodder, the cattle and ghi trades revived in the desert and other barani tracts. A new trade sprang up in the export of cattle and fuel to Mesopotamia for military requirements. Cattle breeders of the Karachi district prospered and dealers in fuel made good profits. Internal trade had a set-back on account of the exigencies of the war *viz.*, temporary suspension of goods traffic on the railways etc. There was also a shortage of wagons and the heavy military demand on movement of war goods. The money market continued to remain tight, more so, by the flotation of the war loan. And the rising price of ghi and fuel pressed hardly on the poorer classes.

At the close of the war 1917-18 because of heavy speculation in Karachi and elsewhere there was an abnormal rise in the prices of foodstuffs and cloth. Speculators and local traders, in many cases, made excessive profits. The evil was particularly felt in small towns and villages. The milch cattle and plough bullocks of Karachi proved a great success in the climate of Mesopotamia; both classes of cattle opened a considerable export trade for Sindh. The demand for fuel amounted to 132 lakhs of cubic feet, which was more than half the ordinary outturn of the Sindh forests. This shot up the price of fuel in Sindh. In the war years the principal markets in Karachi, Sukkur and Shikarpur made considerable fortunes in cloth and sugar. The difficulty of securing currency caused some inconvenience and anxiety, but the introduction of notes of small value was successfully carried through, and after a brief period during which these notes were taken doubtfully at a discount, they found their way into the public confidence.

The effects of the war continued to linger in one form or another. The oversea trade showed a decline in imports and exports, particularly the latter. This

decrease in imports was partly due to the lack of freight, because all British tonnage was chartered by Government. The serious diminution of stocks of food grains in India resulted from unfavorable seasons necessitated the imposition of restrictions on exports. The grain trade, which was the chief trade of the province, was adversely affected by the shortage of goods traffic, except under control, besides, the Jacobabad Kashmir railway was stopped owing to military exigencies. These and several other factors resulted in an enormous rise of prices but extravagant profiteering by grain dealers were checked by the measures of the Government, the most effective of which was the issue of priority certificates to selected dealers. Large profits were yet made on cloth, sugar, oil seeds, hardware, landed property and shares but quite a few lost heavily in cotton speculation.

By 1922-23 there was an improvement in export trade due to the removal of the embargo on export of rice, wheat and other grains. The decrease in import trade was wholly confined to wheat and sugar which the year before had been imported in large quantities. The value of exports rose from Rs. 575 lakhs to Rs. 860 lakhs and imports declined from 1,201 lakhs to Rs. 1,088 lakhs during the year. The rehabilitation of export trade augured well for the future of sea-borne trade of the Province. But for the present the two depressing factors were fall in exchange and a severe drop in the price of sugar. But growers in cotton were better circumstanced, besides high prices there was a ready market.

The next year (1923-24) the sea-borne trade of Karachi was the best on record so far. The total value of trade both foreign and coasting reached Rs. 791 crores during the year as against Rs. 581 crores in the previous year. The increase due to, as already mentioned the removal of the embargo on grains. Wheat alone was exported to the extent of 7,29,072 tons valued at Rs. 101 crores. This abnormal increase in export trade was expected to react favorably on the import trade and remove the long continued depression in inland trade due to fluctuations in exchange and stringency of the money market.

For the next two years (1924-26) the returns of the sea borne trade of the Port of Karachi exhibited a great expansion, of commerce. The total volume, both foreign and coasting, reached the level of Rs. 109.76 crores as against Rs. 89.81 crores in the previous year 1924-25 which was itself the best on record..... Of this total sea-borne trade (109.76 crores) foreign trades contributed Rs. 88.40 crores and coasting trade contributed Rs. 21.36 crores. Out of the aggregate value of foreign trade, exports amounted to Rs. 54.98 crores representing an increase of 37 percent over the figure of 1923-24. Over half of this increase was due to heavy shipments of raw cotton and wheat. The export of the former commodity, which was of great interest to the Port of Karachi, amounted to 119,504 tons valued at Rs. 18.60 crores. Wheat was exported to the extent of 1,046,255 tons worth Rs. 16.12 crores.

The value of the import trade also showed a great increase, rising in value from 26.48 crores to 33.42 crores or by 26 percent. The increase was chiefly in cotton manufactures and; sugar which contributed Rs. 12.78 crores and 5.87 crores respectively. The importation of large stocks of cotton manufactures was ascribed partly to the exhaustion of the previous stock and partly to favorable exchange. The expansion in the volume of imports of sugar was attributed to a large increase in world production and an appreciable reduction in price. It may be observed that Karachi imported more sugar than Bombay.

These satisfactory figures of trade naturally gave grounds for hoping that more stable conditions of trade had been reached, and that an era of prosperity for the Port had begun. This had unfortunately not proved to be the case, and the heavy imports proved to be in some instances more than the market could stand.. A rapid fall in prices followed the large import of sugar, and led to several failures among the sugar merchants. Similarly the cloth, trade could not dispose off the cloth imported, in spite of the depletion of stocks in the country, and individual merchants suffered severe losses. The fall in the price of cotton however desirable from the point of view of the mill-owner, disappointed the growers and exporters of cotton, just as a similar fall in the world price of wheat was checking exports that very year. These unfortunate fluctuations were ascribed partly to the rate of exchange, partly to the uncertainty and instability of money of the world markets, and partly also to the speculative nature of trade in general compared with pre-war conditions. It was hoped that more stable conditions would soon arrive, and that Karachi and the Province in general looked forward to more constant activity of trade when the work under the Sukkur Barrage Scheme proceeding approached completion. The Karachi Port Trustees were, as stated, with the West Wharf Project and expansion of the port.

For the decade 1926-36 the following table gives the aggregate value of the sea-borne trade both foreign and coasting.

<b>SEA-BORNE TRADE</b>			
	Total Value of trade	Foreign	Coasting
Year	Rs.(crores)	Rs (crores)	Rs.(crores)
1926-27	75.43	58.03	17.4
1927-28	76.48	59.32	17.16
1928-29	77.89	63.5	14.39
1929-30	70.19	55.36	14.83
1930-31	57.9	42.23	15.67
1931-32	49.14	31.1	18.04
1932-33	44.8	30.02	14.78
1933-34	42.39	28.47	14.12
1934-35	49.46	32.98	16.48
1935-36	51.33	33.51	17.82

The exports and imports for the same period of time were:

<b>The exports and imports for the same period of time were:</b>		
	Exports	Imports
Year	Rs.(crores)	Rs (crores)
1926-27	26.60	31.43
1927-28	28.77	30.55
1928-29	29.24	34.25
1929-30	25.77	29.59
1930-31	18.21	24.02
1931-32	12.91	18.10
1932-33	12.14	17.87
1933-34	14.37	14.10
1934-35	16.54	16.44
1935-36	17.88	15.63

The great expectations of the revival of trade was doomed to disappointment. The world was heading towards an economic crisis the world trade depression of 1929-30. This can be so clearly seen in the tables given above. We may now take into account the years 1926 to 1929. In 1926-27 the decrease in the export trade was due to the fall in the shipment of raw cotton which, fell from 179,679 tons valued at Rs. 22.11 crores to 146,995 tons at Rs. 13.59 crores owing to the heavy drop in world price caused by the bumper crop in America. The improvement in the import trade occurred because of cotton manufactured goods and sugar after the slump of the previous year. This was due to the exhaustion of the previous stock; but due to over trading in the latter part of the year large stocks still remained. The money market continued to be tight due to several failures among merchants. The next year had little to show towards any improvement. Again the slight improvement in 1928-29 was due to larger shipment of raw cotton owing to better crops in Sindh, Punjab and United Provinces. The imports also showed an increase by 12 percent which was due to not only sugar and cotton in trade was due to the fall in the shipment of raw cotton which» fell from 179,679 tons valued at Rs. 22.11 crores to 146,995 tons at Rs. 13.59 crores owing to the heavy drop in world price caused by the bumper crop in America. The improvement in the import trade occurred because of cotton manufactured goods and sugar after the slump of the previous year. This was due to the exhaustion of the previous stock; but due to over-trading in the latter part of the year large stocks still remained. The money market continued to be tight due to several failures among merchants. The next year had little to show towards any improvement. Again the slight improvement in 1928.29 was due to larger shipment of raw cotton owing to better crops in Sindh, Punjab and United Provinces. The imports also showed

an increase by 12 percent which was due to not only sugar and cotton in manufactures but in addition iron and steel, mineral oils, woolen, goods and motor vehicles all established a new record in the year. The import of sugar rose due to an enormous world production, but the prices fell. Large orders were placed by the merchants at the time when somewhat higher prices prevailed but because of heavy production the fall in prices hit the merchants hard and they sustained heavy losses.

In view of the approaching Sutlej Valley and Sukkur Barrage irrigation projects, a very large increase in the trade of Karachi in the near future seemed to be assured and anticipating such an event, as already mentioned, the Karachi Port Trustees had carried on the necessary improvements in the Port. The quay wall of the west wharf for 4 berths was completed and two berths equipped with five 2 tons electric cranes would be soon available for use when the lay out of the railway yard was completed. In the midst of these large preparations and great expectations came a bolt from the blue – the great economic recession and world wide trade depression.

The very year 1929-30 experienced a fall of Rs. 7 crores. in the sea-borne trade of Karachi and a proportionate fall in both the exports and imports. It was only the coasting trade that showed a rise because of the improvement in salt industry, the shipment of which to Calcutta increased from 7,655 tons to 19,289 tons. This was but small consolation. Of the four berths prepared only two were opened for use. Two transit sheds were under construction and the necessary railway lines, offices etc., were nearing completion. The local market no better than the sea-borne trade on account of failure of crops, fall in prices and tightness of the money market.

Now began the years of gradual decline when trade reached its lowest level in 1933-34 when the sea-borne trade fell to Rs. 42 39 crores. In 1931-32 the export trade in cotton and wheat fell which was chiefly due to general trade depression in most consuming countries and the unfavorable parities of Indian cotton to American cotton. Cotton fetched only Rs. 6.35 crores. Owing to large stock in other wheat producing countries and the price of Indian wheat being above that of the world prices, there was a complete absence of foreign demand for Indian wheat. Even a substantial reduction in the rates of railway freight failed to bring the prices down to export parity. Only 18,864 tons was exported and fetched Rs. 0.12 crore. There was an all round steep fall even in the imports. The decrease was attributed to increase in custom duties coupled with heavy excise duty and general trade depression. Coasting trade showed improvement due to an increase in shipment of salt to Calcutta. It increased from 16,665 tons to 30,905 tons.



For the remaining years of the trade depression there was a progressive decline in purchasing power which reduced the demand for goods to the minimum and exchange restrictions and tariff barriers tended to curtail the volume of international trade. The trade in wheat practically closed, it fell to 645 tons valued at Rs. 0.01 crore. Even stocks in wool were kept to a minimum in U. K. and America. The small tonnage of wheat was mainly sent to Arabia and Ceylon. The only redeeming feature, however, was the expansion in the shipment of rapeseed the value of which rose from Rs. 0.71 crore to Rs. 1.49 crores by 110 percent. There were fewer arrivals of railway locomotive engines and tenders from England and Germany. Shipments of sugar fell to 21 percent. But a brisk business in cotton piece-goods and woolen manufactures largely contributed to the recovery of trade. An event of great importance was the empire trade agreement at Ottawa. The effect of the mutual preference enjoyed by certain empire goods from January 1933, as the result of this agreement, no doubt began to be felt during the course of that year.

The traders of Sindh dealing with foreign countries were chiefly those from Hyderabad, Tatta and Shikarpur. The merchant from Hyderabad had concerns outside India all over the world dealing in Chinese silks, Japanese cloth, toys, curios and other articles of foreign manufacture. Dealing as they do mainly in luxury goods their trade suffered though the cheapness of the Japanese goods appealed to an indigent public. Some of the firms closed down and others dragged on. With the return of normal conditions it was expected that trade in such goods may revive. The activities of the pearl merchants of Tatta had gone far afield to Karachi, Bombay and Bahrein. Of late they had abandoned Tatta and settled permanently in Karachi and Bombay. The trade of Shikarpur merchants with Persia and Bokhara had almost ceased on account of the obstructive policy of the Governments of the former countries and the unsettled conditions prevailing in Central Asia.

By now (1933-34) the growth of economic nationalism in most countries and the measures adopted for its achievement, such as tariff barriers, exchange restrictions and other impediment to foreign trade had clogged the wheels of international trade. The fluctuating currencies of many foreign countries, coupled with the uncertainty of Indian tariff rates, drove traders to adopt the most hand-to-mouth methods of business. The province had to face the boycott by Japan of its principal export *viz.*, cotton, from July to December 1933. Yet during the year 1934 the largest purchaser was Japan. There was no demand for Indian wheat in Europe as internal consumption continued to keep its price at a level well above world parity. The drop in the import of sugar was attributed to the continued expansion of indigenous production stimulated by the high protective duties and the decreased consumption due to the low purchasing power of the people. The coasting trade continued to suffer because of the set

back in arrivals of Indian cotton piece-goods from Bombay. The salt industry continued to show progressed shipments to Calcutta which advanced from 33,505 tons to 34,517 tons. The outstanding, event of the year in regard to India's trade was the conclusion of the Indo-Japanese agreement, which ensured the export of a specified quantity of Indian cotton annually to Japan in exchange for a specified maximum quantity of cotton piece-goods, which that country may export to India.

The construction of a railway line Jhudo-Pithoro, was sanctioned and the work was now approaching completion. It was expected that the line would be opened for traffic in May 1935. Besides another branch line from Hiral to Jhol, which was under contemplation, when introduced facilitate the export of the enhanced agricultural produce consequent upon the functioning of the Barrage Canal in the remaining portion, of the Nara Valley sub-division. More on communications, hereafter and the part they played in the material progress of Sindh.

During the year, 1934-35, the Province of Sindh made some head way towards trade recovery despite the trade depression which now showed signs of gradually lifting. The wartime trade rose from Rs. 42.39 crores to 49.46 crores an increase of 17 percent. Both imports and exports, foreign as well as coastal, individually participated in the improvement. Yet there was nothing spectacular. The year's record though satisfactory remained far behind the average pre-depression years. There was, therefore, still much leeway to be made up. The continued uncertainty of international trading was the result of the parochial outlook which dominated the Governments of so many nations who looked to their own exclusive recovery at the expense of other nations. The outward and visible sign of this spirit were the mountainous traff barriers and the discordant and mutually harmful financial and commercial policies of the individual nations. The preceding remarks have particular reference to Sindh since not only the trade of the large part of Karachi was affected but also the trading communities of Sindh which did business in Perea end Afghanistan.

The shipment of cotton surpassed all previous records. Both Japan and United Kingdom took record quantities. The main factor that contributed to the improvement in the position was the relatively low price of Indian cotton crop. The restrictive policy with reference to the American cotton crop. The increase in shipments to Japan was partly the outcome of the Indo-Japanese Trade Agreement, whereas the exports to United Kingdom indicated the extent to which efforts were now being made in that country to encourage the Lancashire Mills to use more Indian cotton as an alternative to the supplies from North America. A considerable rise in world prices due to the damage done by drought to the American wheat crop and to the unfavorable weather conditions in Europe

brought Indian wheat again in the world market ,though, of course, only for a short period during 1934-35 when business to the extent of 8,587 tons was done with the United Kingdom. The down trend in the import of foreign sugar noticed in recent years was a result of the growth of the sugar industry in India, protected by a high tariff. Salt trade improved to the extent of exporting to Calcutta from 34,517 tons to 83,311 tons or a rise of 141 percent.

Besides this economic crisis by 1936 the Political horizon witnessed dark clouds lowering down rapidly to threaten the peace of the world. Hardly were things improving then the signs of the time drew the world's attention elsewhere. The Italo-Abyssinian war which broke out in October 1935, caused, particularly, in its initial stages, a considerable anxiety and uncertainty in the international political situation, and this had its repercussions on the international trade. An outstanding event of the year of special importance to the import trade in country was the application by the Government of India, at the instance of the League of Nations, of financial and economic sanctions against Italy. The only way to cripple Italy was to stop her supply of oil but South America satisfied Italian need and Italy won the war. The sanctions were reduced to a farce and the League of Nations hurried towards its grave.

During 1935-36 the trade of the province of Sindh, considered as a whole, continued to make a steady, if not spectacular, recovery, though the pace was slower, and the recovery did not embrace all branches of trade. International trading conditions continued difficult. In spite of such adverse conditions, it was a matter for satisfaction that the value of maritime trade increased by Rs. 1.88 crores, the share of the foreign trade increased by Rs. 54 lakhs and the coasting trade by Rs. 1.34 crores. But the improvement was only in the exports, imports had suffered a set-back. Since the completion of the Lloyd Barrage, Sindh became an important producer of raw cotton. The area sown with cotton in Sindh, while four years ago (in 1930-31) was only about 263,000 acres now reached about 842,000 acres in 1935-36 and the total exports of cotton to foreign countries, which last year reached the highest figure 250,148 tons valued at Rs. 12,56,49 lakhs established a further record by advancing to 255,416 tons valued at Rs 13,39.42 lakhs during 1935-36. The expansion in exports was largely due to the abundant crop of cotton and favorable competition with American cotton as the price of the latter ruled high on account of shortage in production. Besides the propaganda carried on in Lancashire in favour of the extended use of Indian cotton was also responsible for increased exports particularly to United Kingdom. The fall in imports was due to the fact that the piece-goods market remained in a state of surprise throughout the year owing to the rumored reduction of at least 5 percent in the rates of import duty on British goods. Imports of sugar further declined. This continued decline was due to the fact that the production of Indian

sugar, which had in recent years considerably increased under the shelter of a protective tariff, was gradually ousting foreign sugar from the market.

We have so far shown the sea-borne trade of the Province from its great gateway the Port of Karachi. It is now necessary to state, as briefly as we can, the internal rail and water borne trade of Sindh. The rail borne trade of India was registered by dividing the country into certain blocks. Sindh continued two of these, namely, Karachi and the rest of the Province, excluding Karachi. The trade between these two were classed as internal and that between them and the rest of India external. The local or internal trade both in quantity and value went in lakhs of rupees. Articles like raw cotton, grain, railway stock, timber, wool etc. came down the river from the Punjab and took rail for Karachi or other parts of Sindh.

The imports and exports by road into and from Sindh and British Baluchistan were registered at only a few important places. One was in Sindh *viz.*, at Miran, within the municipal limits of Karachi, on the Raj road from Kalat and Las Bela. Two others were Chuman and Killa Abdulla, where much merchandize from Afghanistan took rail, and there were others on important roads into Baluchistan. The total value of the export and imports from Afghanistan, Baluchistan and Seistan went into lakhs of rupees.

The exports from Sindh to foreign countries exceeded the imports. The former consisted of raw produce the latter of manufactures. The produce was more often purchased on the field where it grew by local Baniyas and found its way by various agencies either to Karachi direct, or other mercantile centres, like Sukkur, at some of which even the large European firms in Karachi maintain permanent agencies. At such centres the produce often underwent the process of sorting, cleaning, pressing etc. which would otherwise have to be carried out by Karachi.

The most important product that Sindh exported besides cotton was wheat. About two thirds the quantity exported by sea was imported by rail from the Punjab; the remainder may be put down as the produce of Sindh, for the imports by land were insignificant. It was grown chiefly in Sukkur, Larkana and Thar and Parker districts. Most of „it went to England, and other European countries. Small quantities were exported to the coast ports and went mostly to Kutch in country crafts. Cotton, next in importance, came from Hyderabad, Thar and Parkar and largely from the Jamrao Canal. Its importance grew with the Barrage. It was brought by the growers to the ginning factories in the district, after ginning it went by rail to Karachi. In Karachi it was prepared for shipment in hydraulic cotton pressers. Sindh cotton is of the poorest quality it was short staple and hence had a poor market in England and went mostly to Hamburg and Antwerp. They mixed it with wool, or manufactured rough twill with it.

If taken in aggregate oil seeds contributed more to the value of the foreign trade of Sindh than cotton. For example the two most important, from the point of view of export to foreign countries and to coast ports, were linseed rape and til. They were principally grown in Hyderabad, Larkana and Upper Sindh district. Though some of these come by rail by far the greater part of rapeseed and til, which was annually exported from Karachi was grown in Sindh. Almost the whole crop of the latter (til) was exported to Europe (Antwerp, Hamburg and Rotterdam) where it was manufactured into "Pure Lucia oil". Rape which was useful for lubricating and other purposes went to France, Germany, Austria and England. Wool also took a high place among the exports of Sindh. The whole of Indian wool was the produce of Sindh. But the merchants in Karachi spoke poorly of Sindh wool. The Punjab quality fetched a higher price. Among the Sindh quality the Desert produced what, was known as "Nera wool" which was in demand in France. Rice was mostly exported to the coast ports. Most went to Kutch. There was not much foreign demand for hides and skins. There was some trade in bones with European countries.

Little was known or recorded of the land trade in Thar and Parkar. From the whole of Thar and Parkar and also from the eastern side of Lar there was a regular traffic by land with Marwar, Guzerat and Kutch. The amount could not be stated but in good years it was by no means inconsiderable and to the people it was very important for this was the way in which they disposed of the principal products their poor country, which were live cattle, ghi, gum, blankets and embroidered cloth. The goods were carried across the Rann on asses and camels by certain well known routes. The value of this trade was not even approximately known. The imports consisted mainly of cloth, oil and sugar but we must include metals, dyes, tobacco some grain and other minor articles. The trade was chiefly in the hands of Banias. In the western and fertile talukas, where rice, cotton, wheat and oil seeds were cultivated the condition of trade was different. The great market of these products was Karachi and the railway was near. Much of the thriving business done at Tando Adam and Shandadpur was brought in from this district. But information was obtainable as to the value of what was sent out, or received in return.

In the internal trade the import consisted of every artificial production from railway materials to patent pills. Railway material and military stores were the most important items. Of private merchandize cotton-piece goods were the most sought after; in the days of the Mirs nothing was in greater demand. In those early days English shawls, chintzes and calicoes were very popular Muslins, Chadars, dhotis, scarfs etc. worth lacks were imported from abroad as well as Bombay. Sugar came from Java, Mauritius and other places. Most of the carriage

was by railway both to Sindh and Punjab. The distributors were mostly Banias in the cloth trade, Borahs in iron and Parsis in liquors.

Fairs were most numerous in Sindh at holy places. Every departed saint had his day, on which the devout came together to worship and buy and sell in his honour. Some of these religious fairs brought together forty to fifty thousand people, some only a few hundreds some lasted for a week, some only for a day. The following were the most important; the Uderotal in Hala where the turnover was Rs. 2,50,000 and was attended by 50,000 people; the one at Pithoro was visited by 20,000 to 30,000 people with a business of Rs. 2 to 3 lakhs; the others were of lesser importance and brought in about Rs. to 25 thousand and were attended by about 20 to 30 thousand people. The articles sold were ornaments of gold and silver, apparel of all kinds silk and cotton, fancy articles provisions, brass trinkets, toys, embroidered work, sweetmeats, fruits sundries and animals. Sindh it appears never developed to the end of our story, with perhaps the exception of Karachi, into a Province of thriving towns. Its main economy till the end of the British rule was mainly agricultural supplying raw material specially to the English and European markets. Its glory lay in exporting wheat; oilseeds, cotton etc., and that was how Karachi grew as a port in importance. For Sindh can be rightly divided into Karachi and the rest of the Province. Before we close we may turn briefly to a few centres of trade old and new.

The trade of Shirkarpur once of so great an importance had dwindled away. A very few camel caravans, brought dried fruits passed through the town. The local grain was dispatched by rail principally rice. How much of that went to the Punjab, or down to Karachi or dispersed itself through Sindh was not recorded. But Shikarpur continued to keep a hold on its old trade in silk and precious stones, especially the latter. No good reason could be assigned for this, except perhaps that the men who best understood this business were to be found only in Shikarpur. It, was certain that the pearls from the Persian Gulf, rubies from Burma and other gems of all kinds were still sold at Shikarpur and that their reputation for quality and cheapness was not undeserved.

Let us now plough through the other districts. Enough has been written on Karachi. The means of transport were rail and road in the north and water in the south. The goods that moved by rail and road in the north and water in the south. The goods that moved by rail and road were nowhere registered in any form and they were hence less important. By water there were two gates – Keti Bandar and Sirgonda – where all goods were registered in the Custom Houses at those places. Some went at Ghizri Bandar a sub – port of Karachi and was absorbed in the trade of Karachi. Both Keti Bandar and Sirgonda had a certain amount of direct trade with Kutcb, Kaithawar and even Zangibar; but the greater part of their exports first went to Karachi and were eventually included in the foreign or

coasting trade of that chief port. Hyderabad was mainly an agricultural district. There were no imports of any kind of commodity entering the district. In Upper Sindh there was no trade or industry in the district other than agriculture. It had the Jacobabad—Kashmor railway opened to traffic in 1914. A certain amount of its produce went to Sukkur by country boats. Larkana was again purely agricultural. The export by river was negligible and the transport by road a thing of the past. Sukkur had no record of its traffic by either road or river. Sukkur was situated on the Indus and at the junction of the railways from four directions gathered up the trade of the country in a measure to which no other town in Sindh, except Karachi was a parallel and the railway returns showed that wheat preponderated over every other commodity in its transactions. The great bulk of wheat comes into the town either by river or road. That which comes from Bhawalpur and the Punjab was impossible to measure in quantity. In regard to the rail borne traffic Sukkur was the natural market for upper Sindh; also the Frontier Districts. Timber was also exported from Sukkur. No imports by rail were recorded. Here again the bulk came in by the river. Wheat was the mainstay of the Sukkur trade and that so long as the river and road transport could compete with the railway, the greater part of the wheat crop of the surrounding country would pass through the town. The Nawabshah district, like the others was given to agriculture. The traffic was entirely by rail, transport by road hardly any. Tando Adam was the chief business centre. There were fourteen ginning factories and a few of rice husking. More on manufactures in Sindh later. We may now turn to communications.

A decade after the occupation of Sindh in 1853 we have a file of letters between Lieutenant Chapman of the Engineers, Major H.B. Turner, Superintending Engineer and Mr. H.B.E. Frere, then Commissioner of Sindh, regarding the possibility of a constantly navigable channel between Kurachee and the Indus. Attention had been drawn to this project as a great desideratum by Lieut. Colonel Le Messurier in 1840 also, which we are told, attracted some attention at the time and report on the subject printed by the Supreme Government.

Lieutenant Chapman wrote in his report to the Commissioner: "As the commerce and the traffic of the country have increased, so also have the risk and inconvenience of the existing means of communication become more apparent, and has now become absolutely necessary to improve those means, in order to meet those urgent demands of Government and of the public, for the conveyance of stores and merchandize to the countries through which the Indus and other rivers which fall into flow, as well as to enable the produce of those countries to be brought to a market." High inundations and at times heavy rainfall closed direct land routes to the river for many months in each year. While constant changes, inseparable from all delta navigation, threatened to cut off all communication between Karachi and the river. Besides, the opening of the

harbour to the English merchant shipping arising from improved knowledge of its capabilities created a disposition to carry on trade direct with England, instead of through the port of Bombay.

The Government were therefore, in a variety of ways interested to improve communications. The prevailing conditions crippled the enterprise of the cultivators and limited the demand to the locality. It was reported that stocks of grain remained unsold, sometimes for years, due to lack of transport. In Sindh it was found that the proportion the cost of carriage bore to the price of grain on the spot where it was grown was much greater and it could be easily proved, that in parts of the country, at even short distance from the market, where the demand was not limited by local consumption, the cost of carriage to the market was so great, that it was unprofitable to cultivate, hence cultivation was limited to the consumption of the immediate localities.

During Lieut. Chapman's inquiry about the canal project it was found that the cost of the canal was far too heavy as compared to railway. Hence the project was modified and Lieut. Chapman was to report on the most advantageous means or communication between Upper Sindh and Karachi, whether by rail road or canal. Two schemes were proposed:

- 1) a canal, from Jerruck on the Indus to Karachi harbour;
- 2) a railway from Karachi to Kotri on Indus.

Hence a detailed survey was done for the railway, as done for the canal, was necessary. This resulted in the layout for a railway linking up cities like Hyderabad and Karachi with a terminus at Kotri. The trade returns by the railway promised "a certain and much larger return." For it was found that in spite of the neglect of communications the trade in Sindh had steadily increased at the rate of 20 percent per annum, and with the removal of transit duties commerce would increase still more. As a promise of increase in profits of trade the railway seems to promise the best.

The chief objections to the canal were its terminus on the river being short of Kotri and its liability to ruin in event of a railway being established in the near future. Lieut. Chapman, was of the opinion that "as a matter of local improvement, I prefer the canal"<sup>88</sup>. To him the canal meant a large and certain

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<sup>88</sup> The canal would also supply fresh drinking water, a great boon, to the town of Karachi. Besides this advantage, Lieut. Chapman felt it appears probable that 4 percent upon the entire outlay, or even more, might be expected from a canal under a skilful and judicious management. It meant a rapid movement of troops, revenue from the increased supply of water to the Kulleeree canal, water for irrigation in the neighbourhood of Karachi and revenue from the supply of water to the houses in the Cantonment as well as those in the camp bazar, the population of which was given at 16,900 souls. Lieut. Chapman in his Canal Report to the Superintending Engineer, Scinde of 1st November 1853. P. 23.



supply of Indus waters which was a blessing to a country with little or no rainfall. He also felt that looking to the present needs of the Province and the adaptability of the people the canal was the immediate solution. But looking into the future a railway would certainly extend up the valley of the Indus into the Punjab it would be a better plan, wrote Chapman to drop the canal in favour of the railway. But another important objection to the railway was that the natives would be slow to take advantage of this means of locomotion so incompatible with their habits, and, in fact beyond their appreciation. Therefore, Englishmen were shy to invest their capital in railways in India till they were assured (hat their interest would be guaranteed from the revenues of India. Nothing was ever done for the Dependency that would entail monetary danger to the Company. This selfish policy ruined the economic welfare of our country. But it is a fact that for some years the railways were a liability.

The experiment, however, in Bombay was a success especially from the revenue point of view. Captain Crawford, in speaking of the experimental line at Bombay, wrote: It augurs well, and conveys a regular traffic even during the monsoon, of some 5,000 passengers a week and considerably more than pays its expenses. All classes use it – men, women and children; and the poorest, avail themselves of it in travelling on business which is a good sign for the further extension. This opinion was expressed just within three months after its opening of the line when the novelty must have to a certain degree worn off. This testimony was supported by different Presidency reports and hence there was reason to feel that provided the fares were fairly low to attract passengers of all classes it would form a very important item in railway returns. Working out the expenses and returns of a line of rail road between Karachi and Kotri, length 110 miles, it was calculated that the surplus of income over expenditure was Rs. 2,184 which would provide for a dividend of upwards of 5 percent on the estimated capital required.

It then remained to place the two projects in contrast 1st, as regards expenditure and returns, as far as they had been calculated; and 2nd, with reference to the advantages offered by each.

1st the estimated cost of the two projects, with their probable returns, were as below:

	Cost	Returns on capital
Canal	Rs. 48,50,773	4 percent
Railway	Rs. 56,64,761	5 percent

The opinion expressed was: "In this comparison the railroad apparently holds out the greatest promise."

The canal had its advantages as already mentioned. But it was agreed, by these early administrators, that the political, commercial and social advantages borne out by railroads needed no arguments to be adduced that India had immense capability for the growth of surplus produce to take a prominent position among countries exporting raw materials and grains, provided only the means of transporting their staple sources of wealth to her numerous ports were adequately provided. These raw materials were to feed the industrial revolution at home; and since the age of machinery was rapidly replacing agriculture food was needed to feed the people hence the export of grain. These were the real reasons for making India a prominent exporting country. The railways were therefore like roads not constructed to stimulate the internal trade of the country but to reach the seaports to export raw materials abroad. And, secondly, both rail and road were to pass through important cantonments to transport troops to any troubled spot in the land at a moment's notice. Nothing was ever done, as previously mentioned, without some preconceived notion to promote their selfish interest.

Revenue was paid in kind and not in cash, hence, it was a common sight that though grain lay in plenty, some times rotting on the ground, just a short distance away no revenue was paid to Government. This was due to the lack of proper transport which resulted in loss of revenue to the Government and no relief to the famine stricken people though there was plenty in the neighbourhood. This lack of transport also affected the prices as was seen in weekly tariffs. Chapman, therefore, pointed out the general importance of Sindh as a commercial acquisition and therefore urged the Government the advisability of at once securing to the Province and Upper India the manifold benefits which the adoption of either scheme (canal or railroad), preferable the latter, was calculated to bestow.

Mr. J. Macleod, Deputy Collector of Customs, writing to Captain Chapman on the different mode of transport was of the opinion but were the projected railway in existence, there cannot remain a doubt, that not only a considerable saving would be made in carriage, but that the article itself would have every chance of reaching the Indus in good order and condition—a point which, under present arrangements must be considered doubtful. Macleod expected that by the time the railways begin to function the trade in Sindh will have doubled its present value and the passenger traffic by ten times as much as it was then.

On 16th November 1853, Mr. Frere, Commissioner of Sindh acknowledged from the Governor of Bombay, Lord Viscount Falkland the sanction to take in hand

the railway project between Kurrachee and the Indus and to grant an establishment to Lieutenant Chapman<sup>89</sup> to enable him to lay down and survey the line in question during the coming season. Frere emphasised the return of 5 percent after taking into consideration the capital expenditure and a moderate calculation of profits. This 5 percent he said, could be secured from the present traffic over the line of railway A company was about to be floated to take up the construction of the line and provide capital. Frere, therefore, hoped that the Government was anxious to have the detailed survey as soon as possible.

It was in December 1855, that an agreement was entered into by a company (afterwards named the Sindh Railway Company) with the East India Company's Government for the construction of a line of railway to join Karachi with Kotri. The first sod was turned by Sir Bartle Frere with imposing ceremony, on 29th April 1858 and the line was opened for traffic on 13th May, 1861. In the meantime (in August 1857) the Act of Parliament incorporating the "Scinde Railway Company" had "been succeeded by another Act which empowered the company to make and maintain the Punjab railway from Multan to Lahore and Amritsar, and to maintain communication between) Hyderabad and Multan by means of steam boats.

The length of the line between Karachi and Kotri was 105 miles; of the Ghizri branch 3 miles and of the Bunder Head branch one mile. The total estimated expenditure on the Sindh railway upto the 15th April 1862 was £125,242 sterling. Besides other constructions like stations, causeway, and minor works were. estimated to cost £14,000 sterling.<sup>90</sup>

The object of the line was to secure the through traffic between the sea and the Punjab cutting of the inconvenient navigation at the mouth of the Indus. But as this traffic was still carried on in boats it would take time to divert this old mode of trade. This could only be done by establishing a river service in connection with the railway, having Kotri as the limit of its operation. This service could be furnished by the Indus Steam Flotilla Company. But so far its operations to feed the railway were very limited. During the four months (from May to August) the mouth of the Indus was closed as regard navigation and it was then that people turned to the railway and recognised its merits. But certain drawback continued that shook the faith of the people in the railway *viz.*, serious deficiency of rolling stock and a want of a competent establishment to work and develop both the through traffic and the local traffic. There was ample evidence to show that the

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<sup>89</sup> Lieut. Chapman was drowned on 21st Dec. 1853 not far, from the village of Jam-Ka-Loda, about 3 miles from Hyderabad.

<sup>90</sup> Report on the Administration of the Bombay Presidency (1861-62) p. 78.

gross earning from traffic were steadily mounting showing a fourfold increase compared with those of the corresponding year.

Oil seed, cotton, piece-good etc. all began to contribute their share to the growth of trade for the railways. Seeds promised the Sindh railways an extensive down-trade. Increased quantities of cotton began to pour in for transport; and a lively up-trade gave a considerable traffic because of piece-goods, railway stores etc., moving towards the Punjab. The material for the proposed line from Lahore to Delhi was also conveyed by this route. In Sindh the railways depended on the through traffic between the sea and the districts of the Upper Indus; and this was almost confined to goods. The passenger traffic was local and mostly confined to 3rd class passengers, who represented that section of travellers. These were mostly residents of Hyderabad and Karachi. The average number of such passengers per week was about 2,000.

In 1861-62 there were, four passenger steamers of the Indus Steam Flotilla Company that plied between Kotri and Multan.<sup>91</sup> The traffic operations were so limited that nothing could be deduced there from. The navigation of the Indus was so difficult that a few of the flotilla would be constantly under repair hence out of service. The service of the flotilla compared with the native ships was expensive. It was, therefore, necessary to find out if the traffic by such expensive steamers, requiring repairs and renewals would be profitable. But its importance lay in the advantages, political and military, it afforded the Government.

In 1863-64 the amounts advanced to and received from the Sindh railway and Flotilla were:

	Advanced	Received
Sindh Railway	Rs. 15,72,220	Rs. 3,76,380
Indus Steam Flotilla	Rs. 1,53,470	Rs. 1,62,100
	Rs. 17,25,690	Rs. 5,38,480

The line of 105 miles was now open to entire traffic. Half the capital was spent in remedying defects of construction that appeared from time to time. Labour and material consumed Rs. 4,41,000 and stores Rs. 1,76,000 making a total sum of Rs. 6,17,000. New bridges, store buildings, work shops, and foundry were constructed. A telegraph office was seen at Frere Street crossing. Sindh communications were up and coming.

<sup>91</sup> From 1852 it appears the something like a fortnightly mail service between Karachi and Multan was maintained with the help of this fleet. In 1859, however, another flotilla was organised to cooperate with the railway then in the course of construction between Karachi and Kotri and to this the steamers of the Indus navy were handed over in 1862 or thereabout. *Gazette 1907 p. 353.*

It now began to dawn that the maintenance was enormously expensive and it is doubtful whether revenue has borne the full burden. About one third of the wagons ran empty. Want of water, theft and fine had taken their toll of the goods though there were no accidents to the passengers. A steamer left every fortnight from Kotri to Multan throughout the year (1863-64). From Multan steamers left on fixed dates for Karachi and from thence to Bombay. Besides these regular steamers many extras left from Kotri to Sukkur and between Kotri and Multan. Four additional steamers had helped the Sukkur merchants who could so far seldom obtain tonnage. This traffic yielded good returns. The gross earnings for the year were Rs. 9 lakhs.

In passing it may be mentioned that a Commission was appointed to suggest whether an experiment in iron steamboats could be carried out. On receiving the green signal two ships were constructed by an English firm and named Phara and Oobhara. Also a suggestion for a large troop steamer called the 'Talpoor' was carried out. The first two were completed in 1863 but the marine officers and the Flotilla Company on sight declared them, as perfectly useless. But the Phara was tried out between Kotri and Multan and what was feared came true. It sustained many injuries. The inquiry report said that it could not contend with the sea raised on the Indus by strong south, west winds in the inundation season, and they believe it would then be dangerous to attempt her to work upon the river. In consequence both the Phara and Oobhara were auctioned. The Talpoor had a more sadder fate. It was launched February 1864. In taking her round to the Indus, after proceeding but six miles she broke up and sank. The Talpoor was built according to the plans submitted from England. It was not loaded beyond her capacity; the weather was very fair when it set out and it was just the time to take her out yet it broke down and sank. The Committee of Inquiry found fault with its excessive length as compared with its depth Besides, its shake of the engines up to 1000 actual horse power contributed to bring about the unfortunate result. So much for Indian money and British naval construction.

In 1865-66 the gross earning were Rs. 9,73,000 and the expenditure about Rs. 8,44,91. The number of passengers in all classes came to 1,31,364; merchandise was 48,76,170 maunds and railway material 6,79,520 maunds. The steam Flotilla expended Rs. 70,000, the gross earnings totaled Rs. 7,59,025 and the expenditure Rs. 6,44,322; the passengers totaled 7,805 and merchandise came to 5,36,003 maunds. The next year was a disaster due to floods and heavy rainfall. Bridges, embankments and culverts disappeared in a few hours and in a few days the railway was reduced to ruin; it took six weeks to revive communications between Karachi and Kotri. The total expenditure to set matters right was Rs. 5,85,217. To meet this loss rates were revised in September. The classification of goods was renewed and rates considerably raised. Yet the gross earning was more than the expenditure.

Year	Gross Earning	Expenditure
1866-67	Rs. 11,89,134	Rs. 8,99,797
1867-68	Rs. 12,09,388	Rs. 10,63,903
Regarding the flotilla the result of the traffic operations for the two years showed a marked improvement		
Year	Gross Earning	Expenditure
1866-67	Rs. 6,77,314	Rs. 6,60,595
1867-68	Rs. 10 52,220	Rs. 8,01,740

There was an expansion of the fleet and the capital expenditure during 1867-68 amounted to Rs. 1,67,088. The increase in passengers was partly due to the troops conveyed to join the Abyssinian Expeditionary Force.

For the year 1868-69 the amount received far gross earning capital subscribed and refunds for the railway and flotilla was Rs, 91,19,925 and Rs. 42,43,927 respectively. The amounts advanced on revenue and capital account were Rs. 56,52,757 and Rs. 33,52,612 respectively; the guaranteed interest worked out to Rs. 21,721. There was a fall in gross earning to Rs. 9,25,812 and a fall in expenditure balanced the fall in earning and was welcome. But the fall in gross earning was due to stagnation in trade and almost entire cessation, during last six months on the down traffic in cereals etc., due to scarcity in the Punjab and the districts in eastern Sindh. At the close of the year a committee was appointed to report on the question of the Indus Valley Railway Extension. In December the Committee presented their report which was favorable to the extension being carried out and recommended the early commencement of the first section to Sukkur along the right bank of the Indus. The total number of the Flotilla Fleet was now 17 vessels, and the gross earning had increased by Rs. 1,45,262 over the previous year. A portion of the floating Dock from U.K. was conveyed to Kotri. The work to erect it was started. A sum of Rs. 2,71,050 was spent on erection of three new vessels in India. Even the earnings of the flotilla improved because of the Abyssinian Expedition. But this would recede and the momentary extra income would fall.

As the decade closed, the conditions deteriorated:

Year	Gross Earnings	Expenditure
1868-69	Rs. 9,20,982	Rs. 6,66,743
1869-70	Rs. 7,70,622	Rs. 6,84,189

The gross earnings, as we see, have fallen and the expenditure compared to the previous year, has risen. The falling of in the former showed itself in a steady

decline in the receipts of the passengers since 1867, from Rs. 1,946 per mile to Rs. 1,368 per mile. A proposal was made to reduce the 3rd class fare by 21 percent. It was in contemplation to do the same to the 1st and 2nd class also. The traffic on this line was such that no large increase could be expected in passenger receipts; but there was no doubt some thing could be done by inducing the public to travel at cheap rates, with any corresponding increase in the expense. The decrease in the goods had been in the same period from Rs. 9,692 to Rs. 5,939 per mile and could be ascribed to a generally depressed state of trade. Capital expenditure on constructions was reduced and only undertaken when absolutely necessary.

Without the extension of the Indus Valley line, as reported time after time, no increase could be expected in any appreciable extent in the traffic. The reduction in expenditure was all that could be done to secure a profit; reduction in expenditure of establishment was being given a thought; it was expected that by next year conditions would improve.

The Indus Flotilla was in a similar condition :

Year	Gross Earnings	Expenditure
1868-69	Rs. 11,97,682	Rs. 7,31,424
1869-70	Rs. 9,75,732	Rs. 7,91,102

The earnings had fallen off by Rs. 2,21,350 and the expenses had increased by Rs. 59,678; the former was accounted for by dullness of trade and partly the ending of the Abyssinian Expedition The expenditure was due to special repairs to the vessels of which some very heavy ones were made during the year. Half the expenses were charged to the revenue instead of wholly to depreciation. The floating Dock was completed at the total cost of Rs. 2,61,370. The accounts of the London Board fixed the whole valuation and stocks of the Company of the Fleet. It showed that the expenditure had been Rs. 71,37,839 since the commencement of the undertaking of which the London expenses amounted to Rs. 5,94,160. To meet the difficulties of the railway and flotilla the Companies were amalgated which it was expected would reduce the establishment charges, the force of which would be felt in due time. Considerable difference was expected in the number of passengers, now that the Jubalpur line was completed and troops could be sent up in much shorter time from Allahabad.

In 1870-71 the Sindh railway and Indus flotilla were amalgated with the Punjab and Delhi railway. The prevailing conditions from 1867 to 1870 were the following:

Years	Passengers		Merchandise	
	Number	Receipts	Tonnage	Receipts
1867	195,169	1,99,265	133,644	10,00,075
1868	147,439	2,10,309	106,811	8,18,159
1869	99,247	1,40,149	89,597	6,23,674
1870	95,175	1,25,238	75,495	6,66,721

This fall in passengers and merchandise has been already explained. The various deposit accounts of the Flotilla were with the Secretary of State, London. The value of the fleet was Rs. 33,24,690 in working order and Rs. 8,81,556 was temporarily out of commission. The earning for the year were Rs. 10 lakhs while the expenditure was only Rs. 6 lakhs. The rise in earning was due to the Government military stores sent up for the troops. Hence in these early years the mainstay of the railways was the army – its movement and stores. The railways and roads were all constructed keeping in mind the immediate demands of the military cantonments.<sup>92</sup>

These were the primary needs of a foreign Government ruling an alien people. Facility of promotion of trade, unless raw materials was only a secondary thought.

The opening of the railway from Bombay to Allahabad led to a diversion of traffic from the Indus route; and the passenger traffic further decreased since the discontinuance of this route for the troops from Punjab. The number of passengers and the receipts for the last three years were:

Years	Passenger	Receipts
1868	25,894	Rs. 3,95,812
1869	9,101	1,08,519
1870	6,666	52,973

The flotilla showed 22,668 tons as average merchandise and the receipts amounted to Rs. 7,91,730 during the last ten years. In 1870 it amounted to 30,229 tons and the receipts shown were Rs. 10,35,001. The combined management of the Sindh Railway and Indus Flotilla under Captain Wood had been marked by ability, zeal and economy.

Five years later in 1875-76 the Sindh Section of the railway extended from Karachi to Sher Shah (the landing ghat of the Flotilla near Multan) and the total

<sup>92</sup> For five years before the British occupation the navigation of the Indus engaged the serious attention of the British Government in consequence of the necessity of using the river for the passage of troops to Multan and Afghanistan; and several officers were deputed to survey it, whose reports have much interest. *Gazetteer*, p. 353.



capital expenditure from the commencement was Rs. 2,64,61,063. The result of the years. ( 1875-76 ) work showed a profit of Rs 4,35,633 the receipts being Rs. 20,71,531 and the expenses Rs. 16,35,898. Compared with the previous year the receipts were Rs. 4,13,443 more; but the expenditure, owing to increase in traffic, heavier by Rs. 2,52,2 5. There was a steady increase in all kinds of traffic except first and second class passenger service, which had kept about the same.

We may now consider the gradual expansion of railways in Sindh. The Sindh railway of the early years grew to be the Sindh, Punjab and Delhi railway, as already mentioned, and the length of its lines increased from about 105 to 693 miles. Seventeen years passed and a state railway from Kotri to Khanpur, completed in March 1878, connected the existing lines and superseded the Indus Steam Flotilla. The next step was line from Ruk on the Kotri-Sukkur section to Sibi, which was opened in three sections the first in 1880 and the last in 1888. Next year the Lansdowne Bridge, connecting Sukkur with Rohri was opened by Lord Reay. Before this Sindh, Punjab and Delhi railway had ceased to be. Its contract with Government having expired it was taken over by the State on 1st January 1886, and amalgamated with the Punjab Northern, the Indus Valley and the Sind Pishin Railways in one imperial system, under the name of the North Western Railway.

At the turn of the century the following table showed the total number of passengers of all classes and the weight of the goods carried for the public both outward and inward at the railway stations in Sindh:

Year	Passengers		Goods	
	Outward	Inward	Outward	Inward
	No.	No.	Tons	Tons
1900	2 269,283	2,276,512	538,608	598,728
1901	2,502,241	2,509,520	607,240	1,127,010
1902	2,463,740	2,465,539	697,701	1,109,662
1903	2,630,19	42,641,942	646,269	1,407,080
1904	2,927,601	2,936,06	837,013	2,079,506

The bulk of the traffic was with the Karachi port as amply proved in our reference to trade. Food grains (wheat, rice, jowari, bajri, grain and pulses), oil seeds, cotton, wool and bone manure were staples which, as already shown, formed the chief exports. Coal, coke, piece – goods, iron, Kerosine oil and sugar were imported into Sind and Punjab from Karachi.

By the time present century was born Sind was in communication by rail with all parts of India with Baluchistan upto the Afghan frontier, or rather, a little beyond.

A passenger from Karachi could get to Multan (576 miles) in less than 23 hours, on to Lahore (208 miles more) in about 12 hours, and from Lahore to Calcutta (1,264 miles) in 42 hours. He could get to Quetta (538 miles) in 27½ hours, and less than 7 hours more would take him to the Afghan Frontier. From Karachi to Bombay (993 miles) was a journey of 47 hours. Every year saw progress in expediting of mail trains and the time in all these journeys was being shortened. To Bombay there was an alternative route by sea. Two lines of passenger steamer, the British Indian Steam Navigation Company's plied regularly between the two ports, the former had a weekly mail service each way timed to meet the English mail Between Karachi and the Persian Gulf there was a bi-weekly service; and passenger steamers from England and Europe came to Karachi at intervals of less than a month. The communications in Sind had so developed that it seemed a miracle to those still living who could recall the days of the Mirs.

Here in Sindh, as in the Deccan, when the British came there were only fair weather tracks. "Not a mile of bridged or metalled road, not a masonry bridge of any kind, in fact, not five miles of any cleared road. Roads in truth were not a Sindhi necessity. Sindh was a sandy plain where the camel alone was meant to be plied. And even the camel was useless when the land was inundated by the river and boats or native crafts of reed and grass could be seen all over the landscape.

But there were well recognised routes by which the traffic between the large towns was carried on in the dry season. There was such a route from Karachi to Shikarpur, from Hyderabad to Kotri, from Tatta to Hyderabad and Lakhpat to Godhpur to Multan. Road making began in earnest with Frere and in years to follow a complete net work of roads spread over the length and breadth of the Province. In certain parts the routes continued to be just tracks for nothing more was required. In Upper Sindh Frontier there was deep soft dust and firm roads were impossible; here the tracks had to be covered with river grass so that the feet and wheels may not sink too deep into the mud. In the south there were merely banks of earth raised above the level of the rice fields. But whatever the character of the tracks, bridges were essential in a country which was reticulated with canals and these had been built by hundreds.

As a somewhat detailed itinerary of each district only the chief trunk roads need be mentioned:

1. From Karachi there were two trunk roads leading to the north of Sindh which met at Sehwan.

2. From Hyderabad, which was connected with Karachi-Sehwan road by the Kotri Bridge, roads went to Lakhpat to Jodhpur and to Multan.
3. The road from Hyderabad to Jodhpur.
4. The road from Hyderabad to Multan. From these main branches other roads in varied direction, as necessity rose, were extended till the net – work of communications spread all over the country. This blessing is entirely of British making.

There were no tolls in Sindh. Ferries, of course, were numerous. The authority of declaring what were public ferries, establishing new ones and closing old, fixing fares and authorizing exemptions was vested in the Commissioner under the Bombay Act II of 1868, subject to him the Collectors had control of ferries in their districts. They determined the number of boats to be kept at each ferry, their capacity and equipment, the crew to be maintained, the maximum number of passengers and the weight of goods to be carried and other matters provided for in the contract. Today, the absence of such control results in heavy loss of life as one often reads in the papers. The lease was for a year and was sold by auction and the purchaser was entitled to one third of the earnings, the balance went to the men who provided the boats and worked for them. All proceeds of the ferries went to the Local Fund of the district in which the ferry was situated. When a public ferry plied between two districts the proceeds were divided in proportion determined by the Commissioner. Before the Indus was bridged at Sukkur and Kotri there were public steam ferries at both places. The boats that ferried over the Indus and the canals were more than a hundred, besides some of a temporary character.

The cargo (*dhundhi*) boats were of bad material, because the poor Muhanas who plied them could not afford the costly teak timber that came from Kutch and were obliged to use local materials. The orchard is robbed says an old report and the country for miles round laid under contribution. In the bottom of a single boat, teak, baire, fir, babul and the Kureel tree are sometimes seen together and in the same extent of workmanship 637 patches have been counted. At the close of our story fine timber came from the Punjab and was employed in all boat building yards at Sukkur.

After the connection of Karachi with the Punjab by rail in 1878 the river, as we know, lost its importance as a means of communication. But it was still used, however, for the transport of timber, firewood, hay and all sorts of agricultural produce, as were the Fuleli, the Western Nara and other navigable canals. No account was kept any where of the volume of this traffic. The boats engaged in it

were registered, however, and the average number of them on the Indus were a couple of thousands. The commonest form of boat on the river was the *dhundhi*.

The blessings of improved communication are felt not only in trade but in agriculture also. In our description of the growth and development of commerce we have taken into account the all round changes affected in rail, roads and waterways in the Province. According to the prices given, the railway rates for carrying staples were cheaper than any other. But it would be nearer the truth to say that a camel carried five maunds one mile for one anna; the railway charged 2 pies for that amount of grain for the same distance and 5 pies for that amount of cleaned cotton for the same distance, with a reduction if a whole wagon was taken<sup>93</sup>. This gave, I think, a fair statement of the comparative charges of the two important modes of conveyance. Besides, opening up markets for produce, the railway came to the rescue of the cultivator in his most uneven struggle with the moneylender and trader. The possibility was now constantly present in the mind of the cultivator that he could now take his produce to the nearest station and get a market price for it in cash which now freed him from the bondage of the Bania. Formerly he had no choice but to sell it to any man who was willing to lend him money and the temptation to have a running account was irresistible. It was now common to hear of cultivators hurrying off with their grain to the station to sell it while the price was high and paid off the season's debt.

It was well known already that the railway was helping agriculturists to dispose off their produce and freeing them from the tyranny of the Bania. It had cheapened commodities for him and increased the supply of labour. The railway brought stability in the price index and ended the days when fluctuation of prices was a common feature of the markets all over Western India. A study of the prices of grain as given in my economic surveys will prove what has been stated. The distribution of agricultural produce carried to all markets was a great relief in times of scarcity especially famines. The terror of scarcity, at times, in midst of plenty now ended. There was no glut of commodities any more and no grain lay rotting for lack of transport. It was a great relief to the consumer. This of course presupposes a fair deal by both the trader and the farmer. But in a dishonest world, like the present, no facilities will bring any relief to the consumer society. Improved communication, spreading irrigation, fair prices available market etc., all spelt the ryot's happiness. And with fair and equitable assessment the rosy picture would be complete. But revised assessments were higher taking into consideration the new advantages to the ryots. The years of scarcity were there, old debts had to be paid, seeds to be bought from time to time, cattle to be nourished, a multiplying family to be looked after the ups and downs of the fortune to be faced all these required ready money. The old friend

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<sup>93</sup> Survey of Settlement of the Tando Alahyar Taluka, Hyderabad District 1908.

the village Bania was there. The efforts at Cooperative Societies were still too young and to lake advantage of these meant timely return of sums borrowed which was not so with the Bania. The Bania economy won the day and the ignorant and illiterate peasant continued its victim.

Agriculture was the mainstay and progress meant more land under the plough and more raw materials for export. There was nothing else to turn to save land. There were no manufactures worth the name it was a world of self sufficient economy that tried to satisfy the local needs. And, finally, we may turn to, here as elsewhere, what may be called cottage industries or ginning presses or flour mills with small mechanical devices that no where reached the age of machinery. India knew no industrial progress nor was she encouraged in that direction for England was in the grip of the Industrial Revolution at home.

Only a small proportion of the people of Sindh lived by manufacture and it may be added that of this small number quite a few came from the neighbouring regions. Of course there were common artisans found in all communities and did not differ from those found elsewhere in India. There were good carpenters but these mostly came from the Punjab and Kutch. Sindh had its specialties in arts for which it had over centuries built a reputation. But here, as in other parts of India, these arts had without exception, unless it was lacquer ware, decayed and the workers diminished in skill as well as in numbers. European mass and cheap production was gradually replacing the fine arts of India. Especially the textiles to the total ruin of our cottage industries. A multiplying population made greater demands and spreading poverty could only patronize cheap markets. These were supplied by England and Japan. Sindh was, moreover, a stranger to steam driven factories and as late as 1901 had only 39 factories that could be governed by the Factories Act. The total number employed was only about 8,400. The so-called factories driven by steam were flour mills, ice factories, mill for husking rice etc. and even these were mostly in Karachi. They employed but a few insignificant bands. They required hardly any skill and definitely no knowledge.

We may now examine a few popular occupations like tanning and working in leather, cotton weaving, woolen textiles, silk weaving etc. Hyderabad was famous for its leather work, which was honorably distinguished as presenting features of some artistic interest.<sup>94</sup> Boots, shoes of various kinds slippers and sandals are amongst the most important products of the leather worker but in addition he makes and supplies to the agriculturists such indispensable articles as *mots* and *kos* (the leather bags used in, drawing water) leather baskets, straps, whips, ropes and other small articles These are made all over the Presidency; but in Sindh, in addition to these, were found various articles possessing both, a

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<sup>94</sup> Tanning and Working in Leather, 1903. J. K. Martin, Introduction. P-2.

technical and artistic interest. Nats or camel saddle–cloths, claim first place, representing the highest degree of excellence attained in artistic leather-working in the Presidency. An account from Hyderabad, the chief centre of their manufacture, stated that “they are made of hog-deer skin carefully prepared and of a very fine and soft texture. They are brilliantly and elaborately embroidered in red, yellow, blue, green, purple, crimson, as well as with gold and silver thread. The floral and geometrical patterns exhibit considerable taste and ingenuity and are executed with a niceness of finish by no means invariable in native manufactures“. Here too leather pads for camel saddles and girths of leather and woven camel’s hair adorned with innumerable tassels and frequently of tasteful and excellent workmanship were manufactured. The horse saddlers was of considerable interest, the side portion of the saddle-frame was embroidered with coloured-thread and gold and silver wire and coloured glass ornaments inserted. Another curious art in Sindh was the manufacture of *dabas*. These leather jars held ghi, oil and other liquids they were even exported to the Persian Gulf. Embroidered shoes, guard-belts *Katardans* (leather receptacles for cups) and gaiters were also. produced in Sindh; but these articles need no special remarks.

The Mochis are the highest class of workers in leather. The Mochis were not tanners they despised the work which they felt was done by those of a lower position in the social scale. In various parts of the Presidency various names were given them, thus in the south they were known as Mochigar’s, while in Sindh the word used was *sochi*. In Sindh the number of Hindu mochis was small, the work being mainly in the hands of Musalmans. The Mochi held a low position in the social scale, and though he did not touch Khalpas Dheds or other depressed classes, his touch was considered a pollution by a high class Hindu. He bought his leather from Musalman hide merchants or occasionally from Dehs Bhargias or Khalpas, who were local tanners. As a class they were hard working and thrifty but had a poor name for honesty. In Sindh the village Mochi was mostly a Musalman but in Hyderabad there were in addition Sochis, Sarazis and Dabgars.

Even in Hyderabad the leather industry was gradually decaying and maintained a precarious existence in a few isolated localities. The causes were the impoverishment of the once wealthy and influential families of good birth which had diminished the demand for these articles, in consequence of which the traditional methods and patterns were rapidly forgotten and not less potent, and from the point of view of industrial art not less pernicious, the importation of cheap European leather and European patterns” While this had proved disastrous to the native manufacture, adoption of European methods had resulted in an improvement of the actual process of tanning. But European patterns in the execution of leather articles were to a large extent being adopted. It was impossible to obtain samples of their sword belts and other articles only

used by Mirs, Pirs and Sayads on Darbar occasions but the few specimens that remain show the skill and artistic ingenuity once displayed in their production.

In other parts of Sindh like Karachi the industry was not flourishing and the people who worked it were ignorant and their methods crude. In Thar and Parkar conditions were fairly good. A variety of leather articles were produced, even *nats*, the covering for camel saddles were elaborately embroidered in silk. In Larkana the work was confined to shoes and in some cases bridle reins. While in Sukkur the work was extremely crude, and even work of ornate character was of no artistic merit. In Upper Sindh Frontier tanning and leather work were practically non-existent. All that the future held was export of hides and skins to foreign countries and leather goods like cotton textiles were of foreign importation in our markets. The future was bleak.

Cotton weaving was perhaps the single largest cottage industry in India and Sindh was no exception. The province had a share of this occupation. But with the advent of the East India Company and the British rule the increase in imports of European piece-goods spelt the passing of the handloom weaver gradually into oblivion. It retarded its growth but its death was a slow process. For quite some time it lingered, more correctly till the end of the British rule it still supported a large number of persons than any other occupation, except shoe making. Trouser material known as *susi* occupied 400 looms in Nasarpur and 500 looms in Hala, which were important centres of this industry, and 250 at Tatta. Its varying fortunes can be traced down the years in the Administrative Reports.

Beginning with the first decade of this century a weaving factory, to be worked by steam was under construction at Shikarpur. Cotton weaving had already disappeared as a cottage industry into a mass production in factory and steam driven machinery had taken control of its manufacture. During the War (1914-18) the weaving, dyeing and lacquer work industries continued to decline owing to the scarcity and prohibitive prices of colouring materials and cloth. In the Larkana district it was found practicable to establish a cooperative credit society to stimulate the weaving industry; and standing committees for suggesting improvements in the methods of local industries were also organised. As the War ended, the hand-loom factories at Shikarpur and Rohri were reported to have turned out cotton cloth of excellent quality and artistic design. The cloth weaving mill at Shikarpur, though not well run, made very fair profits during the year (1918-19). A handloom cotton factory was started at Mirpurkhas in Thar and Parkar districts.

By 1922-23 the aftermath of the war gave a shock to the progress of industries. We learn that the Sat Narain Power Weaving Mill at Shikarpur ceased to work while the Udhdaldas Silk factory at the same place was about to be wound up. The

hand weaving and spinning factories received a serious set back. Even the Khadi concerns, were closing for want of popular support. The cooperative movement to save the weavers at Tatta and Larkana was making a fair headway. But the major enemy to weaving was the competition of the imported commodity. People had begun to show preference for mill-made cloth because of its finer finish. Enthusiasm for the spinning wheel has practically disappeared and hand made khadi has lost its popularity. This was 1925-26. By 1928-29 it was felt that the small indigenous cloth industry would show no improvement until the methods employed were radically changed. Weaving is an art and hence a weaving school was started at Halla under the guidance of the Director of Industries and it was said to be doing good work. A similar class was opened at Larkana to encourage this industry. The days for a competition with khadi-cloth had begun because of the non-cooperative movement in 1930. The swadeshi movement was in full swing. And the boycott of foreign goods made its impact felt. The weaving schools were quite a success and their progress was watched with interest. For some time the buy Indian movement gave a fair stimulus to the indigenous cloth industry. In 1932-33 the two cloth industries at Rohri and the cloth factory at Shikarpur were doing well. By 1934-35 the cloth prepared from those factories was exported to various stations in Sindh but owing to the general trade depression, there was not much demand from outside.

The woolen textiles or local manufactures consisted of carpets, rugs, blankets and sacking. The weaving of rugs or floor-mats of wool and cotton employed the leisure of Jat and Baluchi women in scores of small villages. Those made in Hyderabad and Karachi were considered the best. They were made of wool (*un*), or of goats hair (*das*) or of both. They were used for sleeping on or for kneeling on at Prayers. The better quality were made of wool or of wool and cotton were called *farasi*: a cheaper and coarser rug made of goats hair was termed *kharir*. The wool was coloured locally with vegetable dyes. Very durable rugs of this kind were made in Thar and Parkar of undyed camel and goat's hair. Rugs were also made as saddle-cloth (*tapar*) for riding camels. Sacking was made of goats hair for various purposes. It was extremely strong. Another industry in Thar and Parkar was weaving blankets (*khatho*) similar to the *kamli* of the Deccan but white and finer texture. They were exported in large numbers to Marwar and Kutch.

Woolen pile carpets were made in Bubak town for sale in Upper Sindh. These were made in jails. They were originally woven by members of one large family. The entire trade was in the hands of Banias. One weaver wove the whole carpet in a week. Two hundred carpets of cheaper quality were made yearly. The prices were as low as the quality and the Bania earned well. Those made in Upper Sindh were the work of Baluchi women. These were well done and very substantial but could not be obtained as were not meant for sale. They were given in marriage as a dowry to the daughter and were kept as heirloom. Jails



could be the best place if encouraged to develop high class carpet weaving, especially in Sukkur, Hyderabad and Karachi. If the industry were developed it was felt it could produce beautiful carpets like those of Persia, Baluchistan and Bijapur. Besides cotton carpets (*durries*) were also made of high order.

As the war ended the manufacture of coarse woolen rugs did well as the demand was growing day by day. But in 1930-31 woolen *farasis* (carpets) and even other similar articles in the rural areas were reported as declining owing to the competition of machine-made and jail-made articles. The next year it was reported that there was a brisk business in woolen manufacture which largely contributed to the recovery of this industry. Though the response may have fallen in rural area the response from the towns was quite encouraging. In the Administrative Report of 1932-33: "Woollen carpets continue to be made at Nawabshah and at Bubak of the Dadu District, in Guni taluka of the Hyderabad District and in Nara Valley sub-division of the Thar and Parkar District. They are generally disposed off locally. The business is not run on an organised system but is carried on as a handicraft." All throughout the thirties the remark was "the manufacture of woolen carpets etc., were carried on as usual." Since it was meant only for local consumption and no export it had, a very limited future. Though woolen articles were of such limited importance the raw material, as already shown, was exported to many European countries and in France it had a favorable market.

The spinning, weaving and dyeing of silk was at one time the industry for which Sindh was more celebrated than any other. In the palmy days in Tatta alone its looms for the weaving of shawls and *lungis* were said to number 5,000; and up to the time of the British conquest, when Tatta had utterly decayed silk still held an important place in trade and industry of the country, a fact of which there is abundant evidence in the reports of several officers. Lieutenant Postans, writing in 1840, enumerated among goods brought to Shikarpur by caravans from Kandhar, raw silk of six distinct qualities from Bokhara, Herat and Yezd and the following dye stuff-*rodung* or madder, saffron, safflower and musgh (i.e. a dye prepared from walnut) also tinsel thread for embroidery. The silk, he said, was spun and dyed in Shikarpur and was then sent to Sukkur, Rohri, Khairpur and as far as Sehwan and Tatta to be woven. Captain Hart reporting in the same year on the trade of Karachi mentioned among the imports raw silk from Bombay and Muscat and dyes, cochineal and rodung; but among the exports were "*longees* and *mushroo*" to Muscat.

The industry has gone on declining since that time *Lungis*, the rich scarves which were mentioned by early travellers in Sindh as the most distinctive articles in the dress of the Mirs, and which were also worn by all men of position, had now gone out of fashion, while other silk fabrics could now be imported cheaper and

better than any handloom weaver could make them. Nevertheless, silk weaving still went on in Karachi, Tatta, Rohri, Jacobabad and other places. In the place of raw silk, yarn was obtained from Bombay and Multan and chemical dyes, as the Custom House return showed had to some extent displaced the *rodung musagh* and safflower of Kandhar.

The fabrics now made consisted of *garbi*, and *mushru* and *lungis*. *Garbi* and *mushru* were fabrics of silk and cotton, strong and rather rough in texture, but equally attractive. *Garbi* was much used for trousers. *Mushru* was good for cushion covers, quilts and for many other purposes. *Lungis* were intended for turbans, scarves or even waistbands they cost from Rs. 8 to Rs. 100 according to quality and ornamentation.

It was a serious fact that of the cotton dyers in the Bombay Presidency, three-fourths are found in Sindh, which contained both Hindus and Musalmans. One of the principal dyeing castes, the khattris was supposed to have immigrated into Bombay from Sindh. The industry had three branches; cotton dyeing, silk dyeing and calico printing wool was also dyed, as we know, by the Bubaks for carpet weaving. Cotton dyers were found in all districts. They were khattris and also Lohanans and even men of other castes. Silk was dyed in some places by Patohs, a small caste who were both Hindus and Musalmans. The silk yarn was dyed with indigo and imported colours. Calico printing was practised everywhere in the Bombay Presidency, but the prints of Sindh surpassed all others. Native dyes were used for Calico printing and the colours were fast. The designs were very pleasing. Tatta was celebrated for this kind of work. Even when the British left it was still carried on in Karachi, Jerruck, Hyderabad and other places.

The trade, especially in silk, was declining between Shikarpur and the Persian Gulf and Central Asia but big Shikarpur bankers mostly financed business in India. Shikarpur, till the end of the British rule, continued its importance as an industrial and commercial centre. There were also two wool pressing factories in Shikarpur doing fairly well and a small cloth-weaving factory that was making good progress. Silk cloths of excellent quality and artistic design were turned out on hand-looms in a small factory in the same town. Its rival in silk industry was Rohri which also produced articles of as good a quality. But it was not roses all the way. In 1925-26 it was reported that the silk spinning and weaving factory at Larkana was working at a loss and the one in Rohri in Sukkur district was unable to find a market for its produce and negotiations for winding up the business were being contemplated. Even cotton weaving was being supported by cooperative societies. The next year the silk spinning and weaving factory at Larkana, referred to in the previous year's report, closed down owing to financial losses. But the one in Rohri known as Arora factory which was also expected to close down had since improved and was reported as doing well. In spite of this

encouraging report the factory closed down in 1927-28. The silken *lungis* industry at Tatta was, for want of demand, showing signs of decay, though the weavers' cooperative credit society was trying to keep the industry going. Like all other weaving industries the silk industry saw its dark days by the boycott movement which added additional burden to its ruins. By the time the British rule ended quite a few of these industries, better known as handicrafts, had all but perished. No vitality had ever been pumped in their veins and they sustain and a shadow population in varied activities. We may close this dismal account with a rapid mention of a few others.

Before we do that two other activities draw our attention – Fishing and ship–building. Sea–fish were caught and cured at Shampir and Ibrahim Hyderi near Karachi and exported to various parts of the world. Sea–fishing was also developed round the mouths of the Indus near Sokhi in Shahbundar taluka of Karachi District. Besides the above places, the chief fishing grounds of the Karachi fishermen are off the coast of Losbella State and along the coast of the Ghorabari taluka. But due to certain disputes with the Lasbella State regarding the share of one-tenth of the fish caught, less fishing than usual was done in this locality. There was a fish-bone crushing factory at Malir which was doing well but it was removed since it was dangerous to public health.

Fishery in the river Indus was disposed of in auction by the District Local Boards. In the canals by the Public Works Department and lakes and natural water courses by the Revenue Department to local fishermen on payment of a reasonable rent. In the Sukkur District, the right of fishing within a portion of the river Indus near Sukkur and above the Barrage was enjoyed as a monopoly by the Sukkur and Rohri *pabas* (fishermen) since time immemorial on the payment of a yearly sum. Since the opening of the Barrage, however, the quantity of palla fish in that district decreased very considerably. This was due to the fish migrating annually upstream and on reaching the Barrage gates were held up with the result that there was a great collection of palla fish in the waters immediately below the Barrage. Hence the *pabas* suffered and the District Local Boards gained. The *pabas* had put their case before the Collector. The Barrage had besides also curtailed the supply of water from the river to the Talti and Chana lakes. Further, owing to the Manchur Drainage Scheme which prevented the usual quantity of water accumulating in the Manchur basin, the revenue derived from the disposal of fishery in that lake also dwindled. The local *mirbahars* who depended for their livelihood on this business had accordingly suffered; but in several cases had received grants of land from the Revenue Officers of the Lloyd Barrage Scheme.

Boat–building must have always been an important industry on the Indus. Long before other communications developed the waterways were the main

highways in Sindh. But like most of the other industries the plan and construction of boats underwent no improvement but continued the same as it was 60 or 70 years ago. That is why partly the British rule and partly the lethargy and indifference of our own people acted as a break upon our progress in practically all directions. In boat—building the quality of timber was greatly improved. Most of these boats were constructed at Sukkur from the wood floated down the Indus. The workmen were Punjabis and some Lohanas. But with the construction of railways and the lay—out of road it was felt that these were far better means of communication than waterways. All this has been already described.

There were many other common industries which supported hundreds of other people but present no point of special interest such as brass work, enamelled gold and silver ornaments, glazed pottery etc. Sindh workers were found in Bombay and even in far away Malta and Egypt. We are given to understand that there were about 5,000 of these merchants and workers all over the world and sent home large sums of money which enriched their homes and cities. Gradually the wares of Sindh decayed and the Sindhi merchants sold the commodities of China, Japan, Benares Amritsar and Madras. By the time the British left the glory of Sindhi handicrafts had perished. The workers in that beautiful embroidery in gold and silver thread were in poverty. They could not compete with the cheap work of similar appearance that came from other places. The men who inlaid swords, daggers and scabbards with gold and silver disappeared and makers of attractive ornaments for ladies wrists and ankles were without work for fashions had changed. Since gold and silver thread was expensive the workers used cheap imitation thread made in Germany but their wares were so poor that they hardly found a market.

Lacquer work, once so admired and sought, had deteriorated and the number of workers had fallen. It was an indigenous art applied to decorating bedsteads, cradles, boxes etc., found, in the home of every prosperous Sindhi family. The work was commonly spoken of in Sindh as “Hala work” because Khanot in Hala was the principal centre of industry, but it was carried on also in other places. Kashmir in Upper Sindh was also noted for a special kind of ware with fine pattern, in silver lines. The lac was the produce of Sindh and was prepared for the purpose by being mixed with various pigments melted together with wax and sulphur.

Another commodity that hit the visitor’s eye was glazed pottery. “The glazed mosques and tombs were covered with this beautiful material”. Beautiful geometrical patterns were painted on tiles, walls, domes, doors and the like. The European demand developed a trade in flower pots, for other decorative purposes and many types of vases. The demand was more than the supply but

the worker lacked enterprise and intelligence in spite of first rate material and good traditions. It was an excellent piece of decorative art but gradually little or no use was made of it and the worker and art both perished. Even after two centuries the old tiles ring like metal and show edges as clean as the wooden bricks in a child's box while the enamel remains as transparent as, on the day when they were made. All this was replaced by earthen ware that flakes or chips by the touch of the weather. The painting of flowers, birds and beasts called stucco was extinct, for the painters were no more. Wood carving and ivory produced only Knick Knacks and those of a poor order. The animal import of ivory was said to average 50 maunds, of which 12 maunds, were consumed by the local cutters and 38 re-exported to other villages. The cutters produced rough figures and ornamental boxes, but there was no demand for them.

Cotton ginning was the main local industry and these factories grew with the rise in the growth of cotton. In every report there was a mention of cotton ginning factories their work and number. There was a brick klin business in Jacobabad which satisfied local requirements. Cloth printers, dyers and lacquer – workers scattered all over the Province. A slight revival of the old indigo industry had occurred in the Sukkur district and the adjoining Khairpur State in 1916-17. The sugar-cane crushing machine introduced by the Agricultural Department was coming into popular favour. Two new industries were opened in the Karachi district in 1922-23, one for the manufacture of glass at Jungshahi and the other for the making of Mangalore tiles in Budhpur. There were also all over the districts wheat grinding and oil pressing factories that did fairly well. Other minor industries such as those connected with earthen ware, pan grass, metal work, soap continued in their previous somewhat elementary condition. Public motor services were on the increase and facilitated traffic to a considerable extent. The leather tanneries at Pano-Akil were getting sufficient work for their maintenance. It was contemplated to start a dyeing school at Tando Allahyar in Hyderabad district to teach improved methods to workers. A factory had been set up in 1930-31 by Seth Gangaram Khushaldas of Sukkar to manufacture sulphuric acid by the chamber process on a large scale. An electrical company in Larkana was doing good service to the town. In 1932-33 some Karachi and Hyderabad capitalists had formed a project for a Sindh sugar factory. They had launched a prospectus. A cane crushing factory was constructed at Pritamabad in the Sinjhor Taluka in Nawabshah District by the same capitalists. A factory was also started in 1933-34 at Sukkur combined the manufacture of brass and aluminum utensils, biscuits, lemon and other sweet drops. In the same year a factory was opened for manufacture of cigarettes. Copra oil was prepared at Karachi and Sukkur on a large-scale and exported to other parts of India.

This is a brief survey of the type of industries that grew and struggled to give an additional activity to the people, other than land. We have already mentioned;

once too often, that British interests ran contrary to Indian industrial ambitions. Even with raw materials at hand they were not exploited to build manufactures. And India's vast material resources were totally neglected. Industrial England wanted raw materials and markets. And only those raw materials that would benefit her industries at home. Her finished product entered our markets duty free, flooded our country and ruined even the few cottage industries. It is an oft told tale. For no one people will rule another but for their own benefit. To expect the contrary is foolish. For there is nothing like a new colonial policy. The new outlook came to the British the hard way and they made a virtue out of necessity. If the Empire was to survive the other colonies of the whites had to be given economic freedom to mould their own destiny. This was a demand that the British dare refuse. India alone stood at the door and was denied admission on one pretext or another. The most important was that she had a still to learn the democratic way. Even these lessons in democracy were measured out in so miserly a way as to tax our patience till destiny intervened and India became a free country.

## FIVE

### EPILOGUE

The British blundered into Sindh as they blundered into India. So great a financial loss it was under Sir Charles Napier that members of the Parliament and even the common people felt that Sindh should be handed over to the Amirs. For the first administrator of Sindh was no better than the British Tommy that came to India to hold us down and perpetuate the British rule in India. His behavior and rule were an ample evidence of his crude conduct and his legacy to Sir Bartle Frere – a ruined country. He was a good soldier, brave and resourceful but he was no administrator. Elphinstone was both a good administrator, and when occasion demanded, an able soldier. I regret there can be no comparison between these two founders of the British rule in Western India. Both were faced with a difficult situation the outcome of a total lack of knowledge about the country, people, language etc. But Elphinstone and his co-workers were men of vision and intelligence of a high order they were scholars and statesmen willing to work hard which they did. Sir Charles was rather unfortunate, yet his misfortune was not solely due to the lack of able administrators but his stupid interference in all administrative questions. He was self opinionated to such an extent that he spurned the advise of even able men who could have helped him out. Unlike Elphinstone he did not understand team work and made it impossible to set matters right. He was hounded by criticism both in India and England till he lost heart and thought he was surrounded by a world of enemies. He feared his own shadow and his vision was completely beclouded. Sindh had to wait for Sir Bartle Frere, the first Commissioner, whose intelligence and sympathetic approach doctored the land to health back again.

Sindh is the gift of the Indus. The British understood the importance of irrigation. But as in every thing they delayed and it was years before any worthy plans to improve or extend irrigation were taken in hand. In fact, the problem received attention under Sir B. Frere and was lost sight of for the next 75 years. The reader will find the variety of suggestions and accepted rejected, over a length of time. The story of the irrigation canals began in 1854-55 and ended practically with the British rule in 1932-33 with the opening of the Sukkur Barrage project. In the meantime Sindh continued to suffer depending on the vagaries of the river which smiled and frowned as it chose. The story is like that of Egypt where also the people waited for inundation to sow crops for thousands of years and not till

the Assouan dam came, under the British, could Egypt feel her thirst alleviated to some extent.

Surprising but true that Sir Charles entertained the idea of introducing the ryotwari land settlement in Sindh. This shows how much he understood of the land system in Sindh. In a world ruled by agricultural economy a wise land policy is of utmost importance. An equitable assessment and land revenue would alone spell the happiness of the ryot. But British greed knew no bounds and a high land revenue contributed substantially to the progressive poverty of the land. In Sindh matters were worse because here they did not know what to do and what land policy to adopt. The ghost of Sir Charles continued to haunt them and they lost their way in a whirl of suggestions which devoured both time and the zamindar leaving Sindh in shambles. It was years before they saw any light and then the period of palliatives to keep the dying man alive. A series of Acts sought to put matters right but the reader may well imagine that it is one thing to promulgate an act and quite another to wait and a period of sufferance the victim has to pass through to feel the effect of the medicine? It may save the patient or either kill him. This is what exactly happened to the zamindar in Sindh, thanks to the British doctor. Like irrigation the changes effected in land policy were so delayed that while they were gradually introduced the British rule was at an end.

The village Bania remained an eternal legacy. He was a part of the economy of the land and nothing could shake him off though the administration passed through a period of great expectations. The reforms introduced looked cheery only to deceive. In case, with the introduction of British justice, the Civil Courts strengthened the hands of the creditor so considerably that the Bania became a land holder which under the Muslim Government had not dared to dream of. Land mortgage was welcomed by the Hindu financier and soon vast estates from Muslim zamindars fell into Hindu hands. The old zamindar class was faced with poverty and ruin. The British again awoke up, but too late. Acts and more Acts to save an ancient class which had gradually become extinct. The takavi was a poor palliative more misused than applied in the right direction. It was ruled by regulations that were irksome to the ryot, and the sums offered were so poor that they failed to attract attention. Cooperatives were perhaps a solution but to study its advantages and to set them to work was a long drawn programme. And the ryot with no education or patience took wherever cooperatives worked sums of money which he had no intention to return. Hence, they were as great a failure as the takavi. Land Mortgage Banks and a variety of such efforts strained in various directions to help the cultivators but to no purpose. The Bania alone answered all the questions of food, clothes, Government rent etc. and to come by money so easily, to pay all the needs of life was an attraction that could never be replaced by any other. Debt was a part of the game of life, an easy way to answer all difficult questions of existence. The Bania must stay. He became a habit.



As a people the Sindhis were no worse or better than any other people in India. If geography shapes the character and outlook of a people then Sindh is a good example. The Indus from time immemorial was the joy and sorrow of the people. We have emphasised that once too often. It was life itself to the land it had made the people deleterious. All depended on its rise and fall no matter how hard a zamindar worked on his field. Some time the water kept steady and the crop matured at other times sowing had to be done again as the water fell just as the crop was to mature. And sometime the water failed totally. No amount of care and expense in cultivation would save a crop if the river frowned. This heart-break made most of the zamindars careless, lazy and fatalistic. As it was they were easy going, and like most of the Muslim, fond of the good things of life. Herein, they stood in contrast to the Hindu already described. The living conditions were poor as they were elsewhere and standard of living lower. Debt was a legacy to be accepted as a part of living like a philosopher. One of the most remarkable features of the people in Sindh, unlike elsewhere in India, was the desire and daring to see new lands and settle abroad. They went to the most remote corners of the earth—east and west. They established business contacts leaving their families at home, enriched their land by sums of money they sent for the upkeep of their families. This of course is Hindu Sindh the Musalman was stay—at—home who rarely left his country save for Haj. Economically poor, educationally backward, but generous and helpful the zamindar always fell a victim to the more self-centered and cunning minority. Most of his woes were the outcome of his weak character and easy ways. He only lived for the day and forgot the morrow.

Unlike any other place in the Presidency Sindh attracted emigration on a large scale from the surrounding provinces like Kutch, Gujerat, Rajputana and Punjab at certain times of the year. Not that these people remained for all time but they solved the labour problem of the moment. At the time of the harvest or the cleaning of the canals they were most welcome. This influenced wages and prices also.

The growth and development of the town and port of Karachi is the story of the development of sea—borne trade in Sindh, The overland trade faded gradually into insignificance as the importance of Karachi grew, especially after the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869. Karachi became the gateway to North Western India. Karachi soon vied with Bombay to attract imports and exports which grew from lakhs into crores of rupees. This was trade across the seas but overland the railways were as important. Vast quantities of wheat, rice, cotton etc., sought a quick transport, the old routes were circuitous and slow they were meant more for camel caravans. A network of lines crisscrossed the country and rapid movement set a new pace to people and commodities. It was all planned to

send home as much of the raw produce and grain as could be moved swiftly from the hinterland. This commercial wealth was in the hands of the Hindus. Even under the Mirs they were a favored community for it was their finance and activity that brought large revenue to the country. The facts and figures laid down of trade, internal and external, will give the reader a fair idea of its growth over the years. Sindh cotton and wool for example had reached such foreign markets as England, France, Holland, Genoa, Trieste, Venice, Hongkong, Bombay and many other ports, in return the ships of many lands anchored in the port of Karachi. The world had shrunk.

With the exception of a few towns Sindh remains a rural landscape. In such a world industries had no place and handicrafts alone remained. But even these were fast decaying. Some were far too old fashioned in a fast changing world since the impact of the West and others had lost their excellence and attraction because the master hand had disappeared. Poverty has no choice and cheap manufactures replaced works of art. There were some who admired and sighed but could not afford and most of this artistic work was like curios to be sold in foreign markets. Self sufficiency was the order of the day and demand and supply ruled the world of trade. A poor people must go in for cheap goods that will satisfy their immediate needs. Vast quantities of cheap manufacture to suit our pockets flooded the markets and made competition with handicrafts, no matter how good, impossible. So died the cottage industry that helped agriculture in its dire need especially when the rains failed and the farmer went to the weekly markets to sell the labour of his women and family. For what he brought was too coarse and unrefined compared with the machine products that came across the seas so fair to look at and ever so cheap. India had no place, though of vast resources, in the world of industry so long as Britain ruled our land.

Are we too harsh to our foreign rulers? It is a question to ponder over. It has been answered but rather unsatisfactorily. There are a few who are carpingly critical of everything Indian and suffer from the lure of the west; there are still others who see everything British with a jaundiced eye and to whom the British rule was an unalloyed evil. To steer clear of both these views is rather difficult but a balance must be struck. To be selfish is to be human there has never been a rule of saints nor is it possible in the world of men. That the British exploited India economically there could be no two opinions. That she blundered into India is her own confession. That a commercial concern became the master of India and looked at every thing from a commercial point of view are all too well known. And that a heavy land assessment was partly responsible for progressive agricultural poverty besides other acts of commission and omission are laid at the British door. A large majority of those who ruled, India had no sympathy

with the people; and democracy for India was an after thought to quieten a politically awakened, people.

But democratic institutions are a British gift. And there were always men like Elphinstone and Munro, to mention only two, who felt, even at the founding of the British power in, India, that a day will come when they will have to leave this country. What are they doing for the people? It was a genuine question they asked themselves and tried to answer it as best they could. They believed and rightly so that education of the masses was a must and that ignorance was due to illiteracy. Education in its modern form was British and India is grateful. The political awakening that freed India came from English books and their political thinkers. Their greatest gift is the English language which is rightly called a window on the world. The world of communications and international contacts, no matter what motives, were of British making. The progress of science the fight against diseases, the spread, of medical education, the idea of planned cities, hygiene and sanitation in improved conditions of living were among many things of which we were totally ignorant. But looking at conditions today we may ask ourselves how far have we benefited by these blessings. A land torn by internal strife which had hardly known any peace for a century or two began to feel a sense of security and political peace for which she was thankful. The menace of the thugs and the pindari, became a thing of the past and men could travel in peace and security. These were no small boons, for which India ought to be grateful. But, when the balance is struck there is more on the debit than the credit side. But as a British political philosopher said that no one people will rule another for their benefit. But what is really sad is that after twenty five years of freedom we have proved so unfit to use democratic institutions for the betterment of our country. And even economically, as I write, we are faced with a national crisis of a magnitude which is simply appalling. The British loot fades into insignificance with what we have done to ourselves.

## THE END

An economic survey of more than eighty years has been made in the preceding pages. An uninterrupted British rule of such a long period had provided a congenial climate in which many economic programmes could be undertaken and natural resources tapped. It is necessary therefore to recall to mind the transformation Sindh has undergone during the last eighty years.

The population of Sindh which was very thin at the time of the conquest had increased by nearly 300 percent. According to the census of 1941 the total population of the Province was 45.35 lakhs of whom no less than 70.7 percent were Muslims. Its cultivation had extended even more, its irrigation, by a complex of canal system, had transformed the barren lands into smiling fields. In fact one of the gigantic schemes of irrigation ever undertaken in the history of India had been initiated by the efforts of the Bombay government on the guarantee of the tax payers of the entire Presidency. Its system of education and local self government had been almost brought into line with that of advanced Bombay. The residents of Sindh could enjoy in association with the more advanced people of Gujarat and Maharashtra the largest measure of self government that any province had in India. Above all the port of Karachi had risen from a fishing hamlet to a position of approaching equality with Madras, Bombay and Calcutta. Its leading commercial communities – Europeans, Hindus, Parsis and Khojas – had come to develop close business social connections with Bombay. Half a dozen languages other than Sindhi were frequently audible in the streets of Karachi.

But some of the features of the Talpur rule had remained in tact. The city roads were somewhat better than they used to be in the past, but the country roads were the remnants of roads as they were a century ago. Though the education had spread, chiefly the Hindus had picked it up; only a small percentage of Muslims knew how to read and write. Though Karachi had grown to be a chief centre of commerce and docks were found busy sending things out, not much of industry was visible. On the other hand, Tatta once believed to be a potential industrial centre had gradually faded into memory and Halla, once renowned for pottery and weaving was now just a shadow of the past.

But the story of Sindh was about to reach a dead end. Rapid economic progress was in sight owing to the Sukkur Barrage, heavy programme for construction of

roads, feeder railways and a new barrage of Kotri were in view when an apple of discord was thrown. It was the separation of Sindh.

Sindh formed the part of the Bombay Presidency for administrative purposes until March 31, 1937. Despite all development programmes described in earlier chapters, Sindh was not economically rich and was not even self sufficient as a province at the time of separation. For a long time it was considered to be a drag on the finances of Bombay. That was the reason why the commercial quarters of Bombay which included certain Hindu leaders were anxious to get rid of this burden and often pressed for separation long before the Muslims made separation their political demand. The income from the port of Karachi had gradually begun to increase and the Muslims demanded that the income from customs should be paid towards the provincial revenue of proposed Sindh, so that it could be rendered a self sufficient province.

The new province could not be economically viable. Though annual irrigation expenses had reached Rs. 170.67 lakhs the total income from the land revenue and water cess was only Rs. 125.56 lakhs. It was a deficit province. For years it was seeking funds to meet current expenditure apart from the development and debt charges, the minimum annual deficit at the time of separation was Rs. 150 lakhs a year. Examining the revenue side, there was no margin for increase in taxation as the taxable capacity had already been reached. Land revenue was already higher and there was no room for enhancement. Much was expected from the Sukkur Barrage scheme. But that additional income had already been mortgaged for a long period. An official committee<sup>95</sup> clearly showed that separated Sindh would enter upon its new career with an initial deficit of Rs. 110.42 lakhs.

But Sindh was separated. Political considerations, not economic were decisive. Under provincial autonomy a new class rulers joined the British administrators. Until partition Sindh used to receive a subvention of Rs. 105 lakhs from the Central revenues without which it was impossible to balance the provincial budget. Since partition in 1947 the fortunes of Sindh were linked with the fortunes of Pakistan.

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<sup>95</sup> Sindh Financial Enquiry Committee, 1931, p 2.

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